

THE Spiritual Magazine.

Vol. I.]

SEPTEMBER, 1860.

[No. 9.]

THACKERAY AND DICKENS ON SPIRITUALISM.

It is a curious fact that our two leading novelists, each in his own particular periodical, have come out precisely at the same time on the physical phase of Spiritualism. The battle that has been fought out in America to the great discomfiture of the press, and to the greater growth of Spiritualism, is just beginning here. We congratulate Mr. Thackeray on the manliness and common sense with which he has met the question. He has allowed "a friend of five-and-twenty years' standing, and for whose good faith and honorable character he can vouch," to state plainly the physical phenomena which he has seen in highly respectable private families; on one of which occasions Mr. Home was present, and floated in the air. These phenomena, which strike the press with such profound astonishment, are merely such as the Americans for the last ten years, and very like what the Chinese for the last three thousand years profess to have been witnessing, and which we have been detailing to our readers for these many months, on the authority not only of our own eyes and other senses, but also on those of some of the most learned and acute men in this kingdom, some of whom have been previously as determined in their opposition to the belief in these things as Mr. Dickens himself.

We cannot but think Mr. Dickens pre-eminently unfortunate. It is not long ago that he knocked his head against the Cheshunt ghost, and got a severe rebuff; and now that his able rival has ventured to give a fair field to the statement of the candid observations and perfect convictions of the truth of these psychological facts—he comes forward to announce that he has discovered them to be the most egregious impositions. And where has he discovered these impositions? In the same fair and conspicuous arena as the friend of Mr. Thackeray? Has he gone to the houses of highly respectable, and firmly believing private people, who can have no possible motive to deceive, to make his observations? Has he

sate down in the circles of persons as educated and honorable as himself, and who have the most serious and sacred conviction of the reality of these phenomena; who would revolt at any imposture, and who would lament, as the shaking of their faith in the most comfortable persuasion, the possibility of any trickery in these *séances*? This, at least, Mr. Dickens should have done before he impugned the high veracity, the honour, and the common sense of hundreds, and of thousands of people in this country, as clear-headed and observant as himself; of millions in America and other parts of the world.

No! Mr. Dickens has thought fit to denounce the physical demonstrations of Spiritualism, upon a single visit to a professional demonstrator or medium where he paid his half-crown, and when he went with the foregone conclusion that he was about to detect an imposture. Is that, we ask, the way to settle a great question in which not this single medium, but hundreds of thousands of mediums, and the habitual observers of those mediums is concerned? Where men and women as able and as highly, and in many instances more highly, educated than himself, and of the most undoubted capacity for determining the truth or the falsehood of what they see, are implicated? On the contrary, his conduct has been equally rash, equally foolish, equally capable of immediate exposure, with the senseless acts of the late Dr. Dionysius Lardner, who was repeatedly attempting to prove that steam could never succeed; that it could not get across the Atlantic, and that trains under the utmost possible stimulus could never run more than thirty miles an hour on land. Why will Mr. Dickens so rashly attempt the impossible? If he could prove that the mediums to whom he went—"the one old and the other young"—were impostors, what would he have gained? Nothing! he would not have advanced one step towards the refutation of the claims of Spiritualism, of which these physical demonstrations are but one phase; for at the moment when they read his article hundreds would laugh at his folly, knowing from years of observation on all sides of them, that precisely the same kind of phenomena, and still more wonderful, are daily taking place in private families of all ranks from very near the throne down to the humblest houses, where no imposture can intrude itself; where the soul's hopes of immortality and of Christian truth are too deeply associated with what he terms nonsense to suffer them to tolerate it for a moment. Does Mr. Dickens think that he is the only man possessing a decent share of shrewdness? That he alone is capable of using his eyes and his judgment to the detection of imposture, or the establishment of truth? That his testimony is to be taken in preference to that of millions; to that of judges, physicians, and barristers, and logicians, and experimentalists, who

have spent their lives in abstruse enquiry, and in tracing out all the windings and subtleties of chicane? The inference is that of an assumption most preposterous and offensive.

Now our opinion is that, so far from Mr. Dickens being at all eminently qualified for philosophical enquiry, the long habits of his literary life have very much disqualified him for the search after any great truth. Mr. Dickens has not been seeking after the truth so much as after the melodramatic and grotesque in effect. He has mixed so much, in pursuit of material for his fictions, with the lowest and most corrupt and degraded of the London populace; with cadgers, and costermongers, and touters, and swindlers, and artful dodgers, for his Quilps, his Fagans, and Dick Swivellers, that his mind has become nearly ruined for any other department of enquiry. Wherever he goes, he looks for low cunning, and sordid trick, and base motive, and a false and fictitious state of things. It is as great a mistake for him to assume the office of enquiry into the nature and phenomena of Spiritualism, as it was some years ago, for him to attempt an account of Italy in his tour there. Italy with all her grand antiquity, her great and melancholy story, her beauty, her sublime arts, her wonderful evidences of the Pagan and the Christian past; her fragments of temples, and palaces, and amphitheatres, and tombs, and triumphal arches, in which and among which the masters of the world once moved, and the oppressed of the world suffered; and where the proudest of the proud triumphed; and the noblest souls wept tears of blood; and where the groans and aspirations of trodden Christianity are yet perpetuated in mausolea, and in the living clutch of a priestly despotism. Italy, whispering from her deep foundations, from her tawny Campagna, from her mountains, her olive yards, and her vineyards, of a coming resurrection of liberty and truth,—was not the scene for Charles Dickens. His eyes were still tinged with the vapours of Clerkenwell and Rotherhithe; his senses still inhaled the perfumes of Wapping and Ratcliffe Highway; and he presented his astonished readers, not with the sublime, not with the touching and the beautiful of "The Niobe of Nations," but only with the odd, the vulgar, the sippant, and the grotesque. Let Mr. Dickens adhere to his peculiar province, where he shines. We shall always be glad to have his stories, with all their exaggerations and their mannerism, because they give us as well, real touches of human nature. But let him not deceive himself; we are not likely to adopt him as a pioneer of psychological or theological truth. We appeal from Dickens indulging in fiction and distortion to Thackeray and honest and fair enquiry.

We have said that could Mr. Dickens demonstrate beyond refutation that the ladies to whom he went were impostors, he would

have gained nothing. An impostor, or a thousand impostors, as the friend of Thackeray has well observed, will not remove a single fact: but, in this case, Mr. Dickens would have to travel over a vast space still presenting different phenomena, in every quarter of which stand witnesses too familiar with their ground to fear any defeat. It is not a thousand exposures against one fact to-day, but one pretended exposure against ten thousand witnesses and a hundred thousand facts. It is the folly of these champions of negation that they imagine the physical demonstrations, wonderful as they are, are the whole of Spiritualism; they are but a very confined section of it. It has its equal numbers in daily communication from the Spirit-world; from friends gone before, and yet continually attending on those left behind, who are as clearly and as positively, and much more consolingly manifested as these raisings of tables and of human bodies. It has its teachings in drawing, in painting, in music, in writing through invisible agency; its spiritual life, which has been attested in all ages by the greatest, the wisest, and the noblest of men. You must connect all these with the more direct physical phenomena, and then with the miracles and the living soul of Christianity, and disprove all its varied hosts of facts, before you can touch Spiritualism.

But we are bold to deny that even the two humble women, whom Mr. Dickens has so foully aspersed, are in any manner impostors. They are humble and uneducated women, who are not in circumstances to sacrifice their whole time to satisfy the enquiries of strangers without compensation; but if they practised imposition upon Mr. Dickens, they must have done it most gratuitously, for we ourselves repeatedly and numbers of our friends have witnessed through them the most unequivocal evidences of spirit-power. It is a fortunate circumstance that a well-known literary gentleman was accidentally present at the very manifestations so misrepresented by Mr. Dickens; and our readers will be glad to see his version of what occurred on that occasion. His admirable account is given under the very appropriate heading of "A Rap on the Knuckles," and which it very truly is for Mr. Dickens, and should be a lesson to him to be more accurate in his observation and description of such phenomena. In this magazine last month, Dr. Blank, quite as keen and wide-awake an intellect as Dickens, bore decided testimony that there was no trickery when he was at a *séance* at the house of these same ladies, whilst the demonstrations were very extraordinary. As to all Mr. Dickens's imagined strings to the guitar, and machinery under the table, none but a jaundiced and credulous mind could suppose such clumsy machinery, which any bold man at any moment could detect.

Why did not Mr. Dickens pop under the table, feel round the guitar and find the string? Nothing was so easy, if a string or a thread were there. But no such machinery ever was detected there—nor, we are persuaded, ever will be. How can a string be attached to an accordion, which moves about a room, and plays in all parts of it, as plenty of people have seen and heard in private houses, and when it goes round and round, and in and out, amongst the company, without entangling them in a perfect web and network of string? The thing is sheer twaddle, and is only to be ranked with those “rats, cats, old hats, and rusty weather-cocks,” which Mr. Howitt so happily ridiculed in Mr. Dickens’s *Catshunt* escapade. Why will Mr. Dickens continue to search the dust-heaps of creation for means to solve Nature’s mysteries? Does he imagine that Louis Napoleon could have machinery introduced into the Tuilleries by Mr. Home, spite of himself, and all the crowd of courtiers, and officers, and servants? That Lord Lyndhurst, during the frequent visits of Mr. Home at his house, would not be able to detect imposture if there were any, as well as Mr. Dickens in a single visit to a paid medium? Or, that hundreds of other shrewd and honorable men, judges, bishops, men high in the universities and in general life, would not ere now, have discovered something of it? What does Mr. Dickens think of himself? That “he is the man, and that wisdom will die with him?” That when he goes all the acumen of the world will go with him, and that we shall be left a prey to the dreariest hocus-pocus, and the old nursery horrors of *Raw-head and Bloodybones*?

And is not Mr. Dickens then, as we said at the beginning, pre-eminently unfortunate in his position, and in his denial of the facts of Spiritualism? He seems to take it quite as a personal offence that such things should be, though why they should not be, we really do not know, seeing that the Christian dispensation is based upon similar classes of psychological data. In his anger he forgets this, and Quixote-like continues to charge against the windmills, which assuredly will catch him up, and cause him with sore bones to be more prudent for the future.

Mr. Dickens, too, has ventured a feeble denial of the facts mentioned in our June number, as occurring in the presence of his son, and of the son of one of the proprietors of *Punch*. This enables us to answer both him and Mr. Punch at the same time, the latter worthy equally ridiculing the phenomena as impostures, and complaining that they do not occur before persons able scientifically to observe them, although his clever cartooner, Mr. Leech, and two sons of his own were amongst the observers. In justice to ourselves, therefore, we have to declare that our previous statement, as to these gentlemen, is exactly

true, and that neither Mr. Dickens nor the Messrs. Evans could have truthfully given a different version to their parents. Their seeing the phenomena was brought about in the way described, by one of the Messrs. Evans accidentally meeting Mr. Squire at dinner, and witnessing the manifestations, after which he described them to his brother and Mr. Dickens, jun., who, of course, considered that he was not a competent observer, and that they themselves were extremely competent. An appointment was accordingly made for them, and then they were convinced, after making the most minute examination of the tables, and searching in vain for the machinery which they expected a gentleman would allow to be introduced for the great object of deceiving them. We are deeply sorry to say that the gentlemen were indeed too easily convinced, and that having seen the wonderful phenomenon of the table whirled on to the heads of Mr. Squire and themselves against a leverage of, perhaps, more than a ton, they declared that they were satisfied with their powers of observation. Mr. Squire, then shewed them, to their great amazement, how it could have been done without any spirit aid, and then himself prescribed conditions by the tying of his wrists and legs, which entirely precluded the possibility of its accomplishment by ordinary dynamics. The phenomenon was at once and several times repeated to their entire satisfaction. So satisfied were they that, as we have told, they instinctively shrunk from the grasp of the spirit-hands which sought to touch them, and so far shewed an appreciation of facts, which their fathers would do well to imitate. Of course, we cannot say what they have told their fathers, but we can tell what occurred in their presence, and how they then received it, and how frank and truthful was their conduct throughout. We should not have publicly referred to them, had it not been for the line taken up by *Mr. Punch*, which we consider as really "too bad," in the face of such facts; and that it is not for the interest of truth that he should be allowed to ridicule, and deny phenomena, which his sons and pictorial contributor, Mr. Leech, have themselves witnessed.

But to return to Mr. Dickens, who, in his recent article, has made a show of something like learning. He has got a *Life of Dr. Dee*, and gives us, in his own way, a most grotesque and distorted account of him. We need not tell those who have made themselves acquainted with that famous so-called necromancer, that he was a most extraordinary man, and that Queen Elizabeth employed him on the continent to conduct political enquiries, which she could accomplish through none of her regular or shrewdest diplomatists. We may, one of these days, go a little into his history and character. But supposing that Dr. Dee could be proved a charlatan and

impostor, is that any proof that Mr. Home is an impostor? That the facts which, with the utmost simplicity of manner, and with an entire renunciation of self-appropriation of them, he has brought under the careful, and curious, and open notice of many of the strongest heads and most honourable minds in this and other countries, are, spite of their certain knowledge, mere humbug and legerdemain? Is it any reason that, because charlatans may have existed, Mr. Dickens should so foully brand Mr. Home as one, without taking the opportunity personally to test Mr. Home? We must pronounce our deep regret at this equally shallow, unwarrantable, and unmanly conduct. Mr. Thackeray's friend bears his testimony to the gentlemanly and unassuming conduct and character of Mr. Home, and we and all who know him well, can testify to his straightforward, candid, and religious disposition; and we must again declare that the insinuations of Mr. Dickens, as regards Mr. Home, are as censurable as his reasoning is ludicrous. Why, this mode of reasoning would exterminate Christianity as well as Spiritualism, if admitted. Because there have been in different ages charlatans and impostors, *ergo*, every one who introduces new facts, which we take no proper pains to investigate, is a charlatan and impostor. Because Mahomet and Joe Smith were impostors, pretending to be founders of new religions, *ergo*, Jesus Christ was an impostor, and the false founder of a false religion. The deduction from such absurd premises, is perfectly legitimate. It is the genuine *reductio ad absurdum*.

But Mr. Dickens has given other examples of his learning. He tells us that these sorts of things have been going on in all ages. Very true. And because this faith in the ministry of spirits, these evidences of spiritual surroundings have so risen up in all ages, spite of ignorance, and atheism, and literary presumption, every sensible man is satisfied that it is a great and eternal truth, underlying all our life, and binding it up with the life to come. It is because it has thus manifested itself in all ages, and in all countries,—to Hesiod and Homer, Socrates and Plato, to the great dramatists of Greece; to Cicero and Seneca and Tacitus in ancient Rome; to all the Christian fathers; to the Catholic Church in all ages; to our own Church, which has its ministry of saints and angels; to Fenelon, Luther, Melancthon, Erasmus, and Tauler; to Fox, and all the Wesleys; to many of our celebrated bishops; to Bacon and Milton, and Addison and Johnson; to the most eminent leaders of the Dissenters; to Doddridge, and Scott, and Baxter, and Adam Clarke, *cum multis aliis*; that we know that it is a condition of the race, and will live to the end of time, and knock down all the proud and self-inflated Sadducees who shall venture a blow at it.

But, says Charles Dickens, "It produces no good; gives no new revelation of religion; therefore, it is false. They are realities that outlast the attacks of the sceptical." Do we want a new revelation? Have we not one perfect and full already? What we want is FAITH IN THAT REVELATION, and that it gives, amid the materialism and semi-materialism of modern times, the greatest gift conceivable. By his own account, this very foolish and unproductive Spiritualism has lasted through all ages, and therefore, on his own showing, is one of the realities. What is its wonderful diffusion at this time, its ever-growing and ever-deepening diffusion, but conclusive evidence of its inextinguishable force and life? It produces no good? Is the overthrow of sceptical and material philosophy, the greatest curse ever poured from the vials of bloated intellectual pride, and the enfranchisement of affrighted man from its charnel bondage, no good? Then Mr. Dickens does not know what good is. We challenge all the preachers and the ethical philosophers of the age, to produce a tithe of the converts from atheism, deism, and secularism, which the Spiritualism of the 19th century can show. For ourselves, we are prompt to say, that we regard it as the greatest blessing next to life, which God has conferred on us, and without which, life would want its profoundest and most heaven-embraced satisfaction. Give us assurance, positive, permanent, and invincible, that man is a spirit, as God is a spirit, and bound up inextricably with the spirit-life hereafter, and the reign of Christ and of immortal thought and progress, and we care not how this assurance comes; whether through tables, or chairs, or stools, or pepper-boxes, or any other thing, however little or mean, or insignificant in itself. To us its functions shall dignify it. To us it shall stand as the proof "that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are." To us it shall be more honoured than bishop-filled pulpits, more glorious than thrones, more authoritative than philosophers, more eloquent than all tongues, more majestic than all heralds; for to us it is the assurance without which all other assurances are vain. It is to us the foundation of a new and steadfast world; the sun that chases all shadows; the ship of eternity buoyant over all roaring gulphs and maelstroms, and annihilative terrors. It is the one thing needful; the rock of certainty that God is, and with him Christ, and all that have lived or shall live in Christ

FOR EVER.

We rejoice, therefore, to see men like Mr. Thackeray, taking the true and manly ground—that of fair and heroic enquiry into the opening phase of the subject, flinging aside the cowardice.

which has hitherto made contemptible our literary and scientific men—the mean and unworthy disgrace of the age—and teaching them to look the matter fairly in the face, as Englishmen should. Let this be the bearing of our men of genius and of talent, and, the braggart pretence which squints over its shoulder at the bugbear, and even then shuts its eyes, as a timid sportsman when he fires a gun, and therefore, sees anything but the thing itself, will soon be held in due estimation. The reign of unenquiring denial will quickly have its end.

REV. T. L. HARRIS ON SPIRITUALISM.

THE Rev. T. L. Harris, in a letter published in the *Banner of Light*, Boston, United States, writes concerning his sermon on Spiritualism, so misreported by Mr. James Grant of the *Morning Advertiser*, as follows:—

"The notice in the London *Morning Advertiser* was a one-sided and extremely incorrect affair. The discourse in question, as revised and extended, is the one which I have already sent, entitled "Modern Spiritualism: its truth and errors."—This contains the argument in full.

"The only classes of spiritual communications condemned, were those which in their doctrine are hostile to Christianity, and in their tendency destructive to good morals.

"The only modes of communication with spirits censured, were those which are harmful to mind and body, no less than to the moral nature.

"The only classes of Spiritualists whose practices were censured, were those who make use of spiritual communications for the purpose of subverting the Gospel and subjugating the spirit to malign influences.

"It only was to that class of Spiritualists who have given way to impure and seductive spiritual teachings, that the statement was made, 'that the vast majority of them were morally injured and degraded by the practices of their faith.' The statements were the same as those fearlessly put forth by me for several years in America; in the pulpit, in my various works, and in the four volumes of the *Herald of Light*.

"So far as I am aware, this discourse, in conjunction with the others of the series, has been considered by far the greater body of English Spiritualists who have heard them, as a triumphant vindication of an orderly Spiritualism—both as to facts and principles; no less than a necessary *exposé* of the dangers resulting from the abuse of facilities for communicating with the invisible world."

THE TWO WORLDS.—The connection between the visible and invisible world is one of the greatest of all questions, and it must ever remain a subject of deepest concern, especially to *regenerate* man,—that a creature distinguished not only from the brutes by his intellect, but from the fallen human race by the renovation of his spirit, and who, thus connected with the animals by his body of dust, with man by his intellect, and with the Church above by his renovated spirit, stands on the verge of two worlds, and must ever, therefore, be deeply interested in their bearing and connexion with each other; and I believe it is only a lapse into a grosser and more material state of being that can annihilate that interest. Often at that time, I heard it said, "we can no longer think of shadows, we have now too many realities to occupy us;" but at the end of 65 years, all those from whose lips I heard the sentiment have learned that it is the invisible world which constitutes the only reality, and that those pressing interests which they once conceived of as vivid realities, have proved to be the passing shadows.—*Autobiography of M. A. Schimmelpenninck*, vol. 1, p. 225.

WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE TEACHINGS OF SPIRITUALISM ?*

II.

ASTRONOMY reveals to us the movements of the heavenly bodies and the laws which regulate their motion. Geology makes us acquainted with the past states of the earth, and the forms animate and inanimate that once peopled it. Chemistry teaches us the properties and constituent elements of bodies. As physical science consists in a knowledge of the facts and laws of the material world, so psychical science consists in a knowledge of the facts and laws of the soul; and, as we can learn of the material world only by the study of its phenomena,—the varied manifestations of invisible force; so, we can learn of the spiritual world only in like manner. The same method of study must be pursued in both. We must observe and collate facts, and see what these facts teach. We must study phenomena ere we can attain to the understanding of their governing principles. In doing so, the most diligent and careful student will often blunder. How many crude hypotheses, how many erroneous and partial theories have been put forward in geology? Yet geology is a true science. The corrective to any wrong induction that the geologist may make, is to be found in a larger and more careful study of the facts of that science. As these become more fully and better known geological science becomes both more comprehensive and more accurate. So with psychical and spiritual science. The Spiritualist, like the geologist, may read his lesson wrongly, may build his conclusions on insufficient data. To correct his judgment, he must compare his experience with

* "What then are we to understand by the editor's expression concerning the *teachings* of Spiritualism?" From a critique of the *Spiritual Magazine* in the *Crisis*: a semi-monthly, edited by the Rev. H. Weller, Laporte, Indiana. U.S.

We have just seen No. 14, vol. 9, of the *Crisis*, in which the editor referring to our former article, says:—

"We, ourselves, from having seen so much of the false and mischievous teachings of Spiritualists, have been apt, at times, to undervalue the phenomena itself; and we are well rebuked by an answer to our critique on the *Spiritual Magazine*, of London, England, when asking the question—What is meant by the teachings of Spiritualism? the editor replies that it is not the teachings of *Spirits* nor of *Spiritualists*, but of the great fact itself—of Spiritualism itself, as the most momentous thing of human experience. Here, indeed, we concede all that can be said of the wondrous significance and prophetic import of this universal outbreak of the spiritual into the natural world."

We had no intention to "rebuke" the editor, but have rather to thank him for suggesting an inquiry so important and so practical. Would that the editors of *Punch* and of *All the Year Round* were equally open to conviction, and equally ingenuous.

the experiences of others, and the experience of the present with that of the past; and sometimes, even then, suspend his conclusions till further facts are known.

As the oak is contained within, and is the outgrowth of the acorn, so the teachings of Spiritualism are contained within, and are the outgrowth of its phenomenal facts. Only let the student be sure that what he regards as its teachings *are* the outgrowth of the *facts*, and not of *fancies* about the facts. To thoroughly understand these facts in all their relations and consequences, in a way entirely satisfactory, would require vast knowledge and vast powers; an intimate knowledge of the laws of matter and of mind, of the imponderable elements and magnetic forces, and a deep spiritual insight and clear perception of the relations between the psychical and the physical cosmos. At present, and perhaps for a long time, our chief work must be to gather together the materials for the building of this goodly edifice, here a brick and there a plank—when all is ready, in the providence of God, the master-builders will appear.

But each one who has had any considerable experience in Spiritualism may, even now, answer the question relatively, if not absolutely; little as he may know compared with what he is conscious he does not know of it, he may yet point out how its teachings are understood by him, and the mode by which in his judgment more light from them can be best attained. Especially is it incumbent upon those who are urging Spiritualism upon public attention to do so on fitting occasion; hence, and with a view to excite thought upon this subject, our present response to the inquiry of the *Crisis* as to what we mean by "the teachings of Spiritualism."

Pascal remarks that "the immortality of the soul is a matter which so essentially concerns man, and touches him so nearly, that we must have lost all sense of feeling if we are indifferent on this engrossing subject."

Now we claim that this immortality "which so essentially concerns man, and touches him so nearly," is demonstrated by Spiritualism as it can be demonstrated in no other way. Philosophy has debated it for ages and still left it an open question. It is true that Christianity affirms it, and in its origin attested its truth by wondrous spiritual manifestations, and that, even now, Christians appeal to these as its chief evidence. Take these out of the New Testament, and what evidence of the soul's immortality can Christianity give, which Paganism had not given before? It is questionable if it could give as much. In some Christians this faith in the soul's immortality is strong and earnest; but more frequently it moves with slow and tottering steps, supported only by education and by habit. In either case it is to them a faith

only; but to those who have had experience of the fact of Spiritualism it is something more. They have not only *faith*; *knowledge*; to them all doubt is dissipated, it is a demonstrated reality, one of the fixed facts of the universe. When the question of motion was denied, the philosopher got up and walked in the same manner Spiritualism answers the question, "If a man shall he live again?" not by appeals to authority, nor by argument, but by pointing to the fact that departed spirits manifest their continued presence and agency in our world. Could the Christian world fully recognise the reality of spiritual manifestations *now*, its present traditional dead form of religion would become instinct with a new life which would pulse through every artery, nerve, and fibre. The difference would be like that of the bare wintry tree, and the same tree called into life by the breath of spring, and clad in all the rich beauty of summer foliage. In giving a full assurance of the certainty of the hereafter life, Spiritualism, as the *Crisis* admits, "will bring to a good end against the naturalistic tendencies of the age, especially in England."*

* So also, in the July number of the *Intellectual Repository and New Jerusalem Messenger*, the Editor, writing *against* Spiritualism, admits that—"An incontestable fact that *materialism* dreadfully abounds; this materialism presses men's minds down to mere matter, and causes them to immerse all their affections in merely earthly things. Mammon is their chief god,—and Bacchus, and Mars are their principal idols. Thus naturalism, as Swedenborg designates materialism, *awfully prevails in the church*, even where the appearance is to the contrary. *A knowledge of the spiritual world is the greatest desideratum of the age. There can be no improvement in an upward direction with knowledge, nor can there be any living faith in a life after death.* Now, it is permitted for a season, as a means of breaking down the dreadful materialism, and the prevailing infidelity as to everything spiritual which rests upon it. Many minds, it is said, *and we believe it*, have been awakened by Spiritualism and its effects to a conviction that there is a spiritual world, and a life after death; and that man retains his identity and still lives in a human form, with everything mental and sensational, in very much greater perfection than when in the world. He is in a spiritual body adapted to the spiritual world, and has lost nothing by death but his gross earthly body which he wants no more. Hence the mere clay fabric of materialism is shattered by this miraculous (?) belief, because it comes home to the very senses, and is *materialism on its own ground.* *Spiritualism, it cannot be doubted, during the last fifteen years, done much to shatter these rocks of infidelity, and move men's minds in the direction of a faith in the spiritual world, and of a life after death.*" And the Rev. J. P. Stuart, also, like the editors of the *Intellectual Repository* and the *Crisis*, a disciple and preacher of the doctrines of Swedenborg declares:—"We might see for ourselves that we are gaining a most glorious result in the *demonstrations of the spiritual world* that are given to men of every age and country for whether declarations of men who have passed into the other life are true or false, weighty or worthless, wise or nonsensical, *one thing is gained by them.* Henceforth the world shall *know* that death is neither a temporary nor an eternal sleep; but, when stripped of his mortal coil, 'A man's a man for a' that.' Henceforth it shall be *known* that the sphere of immortal life is contiguous to the sphere of mortal life, and that millions of spiritual beings, unseen and unknown, 'Throng the air and tread the earth.'"

Again, Spiritualism supplies us with some certain knowledge of the spirit-world. We do not mean that information which spirits may give us in verbal description or pictorial representation, and which, in any given instance, may, or may not correspond to fact; but we mean that self-revelment of qualities and states which is disclosed to us in their intercourse and acts; for in these they truly, though, it may be, unconsciously, manifest *themselves*; perhaps, in a way even contrary to their intentions and verbal communications. Language we know is not the only, and often not the best expression of character.

Those who, on receiving the first gleams of light from the opening spiritual intercourse, have anticipated therefrom absolutely reliable verbal dicta concerning all things which appertain to the unseen state of existence, and which come within the province of spiritual powers, feel a deep sense of disappointment and chagrin on finding that the communications from their invisible correspondents are sometimes frivolous and false; and they very naturally inquire what they can learn from a source which is thus untrustworthy? This, for one thing:—that these prepossessions concerning spirits and the spirit-world, derived principally from past modes of belief, do not rest upon any substantial basis,—that in supposing that spirits are permitted to communicate only what is true and of the gravest moment, they have been under a delusion. You complain, my friend, that the spiritual communications you receive are not to be implicitly trusted. Well, perhaps *that* is the very lesson they are permissively and chiefly designed to teach you, and the one which, in relation to the subject, you most need; and how could they teach it you so effectually in any other way? If you surrender yourself to the *ipse dixit* of any spirit, or give up the reins of your own judgment into other hands, it is at your peril. That is the simple obvious teaching of the facts themselves. We speak now of those facts only in which the falsehood and frivolity of verbal spirit-communications are intentional, and unmistakably originate in the communicating spirits. Of the *supposed* unreliabilities and levities which result from misunderstanding, or from discordant and disturbing elements in the medium and surrounding conditions, we may perhaps speak in a subsequent article.

We are happy to know that we here take common ground with our co-labourers in America. The *Spiritual Telegraph and Preacher* (for many years the principal organ of American Spiritualists), in a leading article on THE UNRELIABILITY OF SPIRIT-COMMUNICATIONS, remarks:—

The feelings both of friends and opposers, as based upon the unreliabilities referred to, might, we think, undergo a considerable modification, if they would look beyond the merely *superficial* aspects of this subject, to the grand *phenomenal*

significance which, we believe, it was providentially designed to bear to the world. It would then, perhaps, be seen that while a communicating spirit speaks our language, an entirely different, and it may be, so far as the spirit is concerned, even totally unintended language, is tacitly borne to the understanding of the reflective receiver of the message. In the former aspect, which is merely the *verbal* and *personal*, the communication may be totally false; in the latter, it may be, and when *properly understood*, always necessarily *is*, absolutely true and infallible. In the former sense, the communication may be simply from the *spirit*, who may or may not be able and willing to tell us the truth; in the latter it may be regarded as in some sense a communication from God, and fraught with *infallible* truth highly important for man to know.

Let us illustrate: suppose that raps to letters of the alphabet, produced by the spirit of a deceased human being, spell out the sentence, "There is no God, no distinction between good and evil, and no moral responsibility." Now taking this in its merely superficial import—the import in which it was evidently intended by the spirit to be understood—it must, of course, be pronounced totally false. But supposing that it is established beyond a doubt, that this communication actually comes from a human spirit, is there not something else that is said to us by its means? Most certainly there is, and *that*, after all, is the chief point of value in the whole matter. It is *tacitly* said, 'among other things, that "human spirits possess intelligence (and ignorance) similar to that which characterized them while dwellers in the mortal body; and that there are those who are actually so low in intelligence, in morals, and in the perception of spiritual and divine things, as to deny the existence of a God, the distinction between good and evil, and the moral responsibility of man." This is the language of the *phenomenon itself*, and in that sense it may be regarded as the language of God, just as much as the falling apple was to Newton the language of the Great Author of material nature speaking of the general law of gravitation.

Now if it be a *fact* that there are spirits in the other world whose intellectual and moral states are such as would be represented by an outer expression like the one above supposed, then it is of great importance that the world, especially the *theological* world, should *know* that fact. But how can the world be made to know it so certainly as by the fact being permitted to exhibit itself by means of just such a communication? A truth so novel, and so contrary to the generally-received opinion on this subject, would not be likely to obtain credence on any mere *verbal* testimony coming through a rapping, writing, or speaking medium, and therefore it is permitted to come to the world in the language of *ocular and oral demonstration*. The fact, in other words, is permitted to *show itself*.

So then, if all spirit-manifestations, in all their multitudinous varieties, were studied simply in their *phenomenal* aspects and bearings, as the facts of the laboratory, of electrical experiments, and of planetary and sidereal motions, are studied by the philosopher, they would be found to open new and almost boundless fields of thought and of scientific demonstration concerning the nature and laws of spirit existence, the relations between this and the invisible worlds, the conditions, laws, benefits, and dangers of spirit intercourse, and concerning all things pertaining to the interior nature of man, both in this world and in the world hereafter.

If, therefore, every merely *verbal* communication that has ever been given by spirits to mortals is a *false* one (a supposition which we by no means entertain), still the current spiritual phenomena are pregnant with the most profound and important instruction to those who bring to them the proper spirit and powers of investigation.

It may also be noted that the class of facts indicated in the foregoing extract conclusively establish that the communications received at spiritual *séances* do not proceed from some occult operation of the minds of the inquirers or of the circle, as, in such instances, not only do they not correspond thereto, but are directly contrary to their wishes and expectations. Granting,

then, that these facts demonstrate that there are spirits low in mind and morals; that the qualities of human nature, evil as well as good, perpetuate themselves in the invisible world; that some "physico-spiritual manifestations have been connected with a very palpable dishonesty on the part of spirits,"—on the other hand, (in the words of the Rev. T. L. Harris, who does not represent Spiritualism too *couleur de rose*):—

I must conclude that others have emanated from high sources and been attended with benignant consequences. When the field is cleared of disorders, in the putting down of evil, and the preparation of mankind, we have every reason to expect that matter, no less than mind, will be glorified by frequent displays of the celestial beauties and harmonies. When devout persons tell me of floods of delicious odour diffused upon the air;—of angel-voices heard by the bedside of the dying, or where two or three are gathered together in pure love and holy converse;—of grand and solemn words pronounced by invisible lips, and pulsing along the atmosphere;—of visions of unearthly beauty, where landscapes beam, appalled in the express purity of the Divine Nature;—when the mother clasps the sweet form of her heaven-nurtured infant;—when wife and husband meet, whom death has no power to part, since the affections of the pure are mightier than mortality;—when the good, the nobly great of other days evince their presence by a dispensation of heroic strength, to fill the bosom with an equal virtue, and inspire it for as true a battle with the evils of the time;—when, *as I know*, through angel-messengers, the seemingly dead are kept from being buried alive; and mariners saved from shipwreck on the wide ocean; and travellers preserved from equal perils,—from fire, or from explosions, or from the fall of buildings, or the infection of pestilences, on land;—when invisible hands strike from the grasp of the physician unsuitable medicines that might affect the life;—when the sick are healed through the presence and influence of angels;—when charities are made more discriminating; and lips made less censorious; and bodies more sound; and hearts more virtuous;—when greater strength is given for greater burdens borne for humanity in God; when the hungry are fed, and the naked clothed; and those sick and in prison ministered unto, through the direct presence and felt influence of angels and good spirits with man;—every argument that concurs to fix my faith in the Christian gospel forces me to admit a Divine element in the spiritual manifestations of our day.*

Looking then at its two obverse sides, we learn from an open spiritual intercourse that the spirit-world is, to a great extent, a reflex of this in its past and present states; that the future life is a continuation under, in some respects new conditions, of our inner or spiritual life in this,—that a man, therefore, who has been a devil here does not emerge into sudden angelhood in the spirit-world, for the kingdom of hell, no less than the kingdom of heaven, is within the man; and if he would escape the one and attain the other, he may do so here and now. This world is sometimes described as "the *rudimental* sphere," and rightly so, for here are formed the *roots* of character—of that tree of life which bears its fruit through the countless ages of the evermore. The distinction between spiritual and temporal is not that of the present and the future, but of qualities and states. We do not assert that there is any novelty in these "facts and teachings" of

* *Modern Spiritualism: Its Truths and Errors.* White, Bloomsbury Street.

Spiritualism ; but, nevertheless, we think we were not wrong in affirming, in the first number of this Magazine, that they "are needed by every denomination of religionists, and by all classes of philosophers." And in enabling men to realize them more vividly, Spiritualism has done and is doing an inestimable service. Spiritualism teaches both negatively and positively : it dispels error and establishes truth. It substitutes facts for mere speculations about facts, and thus settles what, for want of the data supplies, have hitherto been interminable wordy controversies. For instance, how many volumes have been written on the question, whether, on the death of the body, the soul retains its consciousness and active powers, or whether these are suspended till a future and distant time, when all will be summoned to simultaneous judgment? Spiritualism answers this question, not by disputation, but by showing that spirits who have left the earthly form do *now* manifest consciousness, and exercise potencies which often amaze those who witness their effects.

Again, many scientific men affirm that certain of the phenomena said to be produced by spiritual agency cannot possibly take place, because they are contrary to the law of gravitation. They forget that the evidence of gravitation depends on the testimony of the same senses as testify to the reality of the phenomena in question, and that if their testimony is rejected as untrustworthy the proof of gravitation is itself invalidated. Spiritualism, while it recognises the physical law, teaches, by the demonstration of facts, that there are other and higher laws by which the resistance of gravitation is overcome or suspended. Dr. Brownson remarks:—

Your learned academicians generally commence their investigations with the persuasion that all facts of the kind alleged are impossible. Their study is simply to explain away the phenomena without admitting their supernatural or superhuman character. Babinet, of the Institute, has just written an essay in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which he pronounces the phenomena alleged by our recent Spiritists impossible, because they contradict the law of gravitation. Poor man ! he reasons as if the phenomena repugnant to the law of gravitation are supposed to be produced by it, or at least without a power that overcomes it. Why, the very marvellousness of the phenomenon is that it is contrary to the law of gravitation ; and because it is contrary to the law of gravitation, we infer that it is preternatural. The learned member of the Institute argues that the fact is impossible, because it would be preternatural, and the preternatural is impossible because it would be preternatural ! When I see a man raised without any visible means to the ceiling, and held there by his feet with his head downwards for half an hour or more without a visible support, I do not pretend that it is in accordance with the law of gravitation, but the essence of the fact is precisely that it is not. Now, to deny the fact for that reason, is to say that the law of gravitation cannot be overcome or suspended, and precisely to beg the question. When I throw a stone into the air, my force, in some sense, overcomes that of gravitation. How does M. Babinet know that there are not invisible powers who can take a man and hold him up with his feet to the ceiling, or a table, as easily as I can a little child? The fact of the rising of a table or a man to the ceiling is one that is easily verified by the senses, and, if attested by witnesses of ordinary capacity and credibility, must be admitted. That it is contrary to the law of gravitation, proves not that it is impossible.

but that it is possible only preternaturally. It would be a real relief to find a distinguished academician who had learned practically the elements of logic.

We trust that our "learned academicians" and all whom it may concern, will profit by this hint of their learned brother, notwithstanding the slight tone of asperity in which it is conveyed. It is time that *à priori* conclusions should be subordinate to *à posteriori* facts. It is time that in addition to their other learning, academicians and professors should learn to be a little more modest, and a little less hasty in dogmatising on matters they have not sufficiently investigated. Spiritualism has its *teachings* for them as well as for other classes of the community, and they will yet have to learn them too; and the sooner they set about it the better.

Take another illustration. There are certain persons in whose presence, probably from whose effluences and auras, spirits can draw certain magnetic or other elements, and with these clothe a "spirit-hand" with sufficient materiality to be seen and felt by all present. This, within the last few years, has been experienced by hundreds of persons in this metropolis, and throughout Europe and America. This fact teaches that matter is fluent to spirit; that, under given conditions, spirit, even when deprived of its earthly vehicle, can dominate matter—can operate on and control substances in the physical world. These finer ~~essences~~ and elements of nature seem to be, as it were, the border-land—a *point d'appui* between spirit and those grosser forms of matter cognizable to the senses, and to present a field rich in possible discoveries of the highest magnitude to the qualified investigator.

It must at present suffice simply to indicate that Spiritualism gives us clearer views of many things difficult and perplexing in our study of the past;—in sacred and classical, ancient and mediæval history. It teaches, for instance, that much currently set down to the credit of superstition and imposture, may nevertheless be true, or contain a large element of truth; and that men in the past were not altogether, in such matters, the knaves and fools they are so frequently represented. "For the first time in the light of these phenomena," says Mr. Harris, "the so-called miraculous evidence of the various religions, both of antiquity and of recent date, is brought within the purview of a rational investigation."

We need not pursue these illustrations farther, as our purpose is simply to indicate the *method* by which the "*teachings* of Spiritualism" may best be ascertained; but there is one point to which we would briefly advert ere we close this article.

Some of our contemporaries representing different sections of the Christian Church, look on Spiritualism with "jaundiced

eye," because it does not endorse the doctrines they severally represent, and we have been told that our own humble effort "ought to rest" on what are held as "leading truths," by a peculiar religious communion. If we do not respond to such appeal in the way desired, it is not that we are indifferent to religious truth, the pursuit of which we regard as the noblest that can occupy the mind of man. Did we not believe that true Spiritualism was conducive to this end, we should be labouring to make it more widely known, and better understood. But the distinguishing views of the various religious bodies are mostly represented already by periodicals instituted for that purpose. It is not the object of the *Spiritual Magazine* to compete with any of these, but rather, by a class of persons usually ignored, to aid in establishing and confirming men in those fundamental truths of religion, which are held in common by all churches, and on which they necessarily rest. Spiritualism takes men beyond the specific differences which divide churches, to those "leading truths," which unite and knit them together. It cannot, therefore, become the mere satellite of any sect, or of any church.

We have stood at the Land's End, and watched the waves as they foamed, and beat, and broke at the base of the rocks, and we thought of the many and various ships of all nations journeying over the vast ocean before us, to the new world beyond, and how these corresponded to that great time-sea, beating against the shore of our mortal life; of the churches as spiritual ships, which were sailing on it to that new world where there is no more sea:—ships of all kinds, hoisting different colours, under different captains, manned by different crews speaking different languages. And from each there comes a voice; one cries "Come and voyage with me; this ship is under royal patronage, is chartered by act of parliament, is well manned and victualled, there is wine and music on board, the company are all respectable, everything is arranged for convenience and comfort; come with me." And another cries "Come and voyage with me; this is an ancient, stately vessel, the oldest ship afloat, it has withstood many a storm; when you come aboard you need take no further trouble, the ship is safe, it *can't* go wrong; come with me." And a third, in a tone of great complacency, cries "Come and voyage with me; this is a new ship, built according to certain occult principles, of which all ship-builders for ages have been ignorant, and our captain is the most wonderful captain that ever was or ever will be; come with me." And there are more voices, a perfect Babel of them, equally importunate, and all anxious that we should sail with them, and join them in proclaiming the superior merits of their several

crafts. We can only say to one and all, brothers, we cannot becomeouters for any ship, that is not our vocation; but we seek to disparage none, and desire every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind. With Reason for your compass, the New Testament for your chart, the Polar-star of Duty for your guide, and genial gales from the spirit-world to waft you on your way,—we wish you all a safe and prosperous voyage. Despise not the friendly light-houses Spiritualism has erected to warn you from the sunken rocks and dangerous places, and as you go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters, may you see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

In conclusion, we would commend to the consideration of the reader the noble words of Plato.

"Let him then take confidence for his soul, who during his life has adorned it not with strange attire, but with that which properly belongs to it, such as temperance, justice, strength, liberty, and truth; he may tranquilly await the hour of his departure for the other world, as being prepared for the voyage when destiny shall call him to undertake it."

MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SPIRITUALISM.

As a pendant to the foregoing article we present the last chapter, headed as above, of a work entitled *Qu'est que le Spiritisme?* by Allan Kardec, Editor of the *Revue Spirite*, Paris.

By reasoning, practical study, and observation of facts, Spiritualism confirms and proves the fundamental bases of religion, namely:—

The existence of an only, omnipotent God, creator of all things, supremely just and good.

The existence of the soul: its immortality and its individuality after death.

Man's free will, and the responsibility which he incurs for all his acts.

Man's happy or unhappy state after death, according to the use which he has made of his faculties during this life.

The necessity of good and the dire consequences of evil.

The utility of prayer.

It resolves many problems which find their only possible explanation in the existence of an invisible world, peopled by beings who have thrown off the corporeal envelope, who surround us, and who exercise an increasing influence upon the visible world.

It is a source of consolation:—

By the certainty which it gives us of the future which awaits us.

By the material proof of the existence of those whom we have loved on earth, the certainty of their presence about us, the certainty of rejoining them in the world of spirits, and the possibility of communicating with them, and of receiving salutary counsels from them.

By the courage which it gives us in adversity.

By the elevation which it impresses upon our thoughts in giving us a just idea of the value of the things and goods of this world.

It contributes to the happiness of man upon the earth:—

In counteracting hopelessness and despair.

In teaching man to be content with what he has.

In teaching him to regard wealth, honor, and power as trials more dreaded than desired.

In inspiring him with sentiments of charity and true fraternity to his neighbour.

The result of these principles, once propagated and rooted in the human heart, will be:—

To render men better and more indulgent to their kind.

To gradually destroy individual selfishness, by the community which establishes among men.

To excite a laudable emulation for good.

To put a curb upon disorderly desires.

To favor intellectual and moral development, not merely with respect to present well-being, but to the future which is attached to it;

And, by all these causes, to aid in the progressive amelioration of humankind.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING AND MR. HOWITT

WILLIAM HOWITT's article on "The Earth-Plane and the Spiritual Plane in Literature," which appeared in our last number, called forth the following letter:—

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—I cannot resist saying a word in defence of my admired and friend, Mrs. Browning, who is selected by Mr. Howitt in his able and interesting essay, as an example of the earth-plane in modern poetry.

Although in a foot-note Mr. Howitt acknowledges the mistake of having taken the *Curse for a Nation* to mean England, not America, he does not appear cognisant of the fact that this poem was written several years ago, and was without further explanation placed in the collection.

As to Mrs. Browning's admiration of Louis Napoleon, it is founded on a generous and noble enthusiasm, even if a mistaken one; she believes him to mean what she makes him say in her *Tale of Villa Franca*—

"The world is many, I am one,
My great deed was too great;
God's fruit of justice ripens slow,
Men's souls are narrow, let them grow,
My brothers, we must wait."

When Mr. Howitt says that Mrs. Browning has changed and lowered her style since her earlier poems, he surely cannot include in this criticism *A Leigh* as a proof of the change. He has not indeed named it; but surely passages as those to which I would call his attention, do not emanate from inspiration *from below*. I quote almost at hazard; for one cannot open a volume of this truly great work, without opening up some stream of the fulfiling intellect and poesy within.

"Without the spiritual, observe,
The natural's impossible;—no form,
No motion! Without sensuous, spiritual
Is inappreciable;—no beauty or power!
And in this twofold sphere the twofold man
(And still the artist is intensely a man)
Holds firmly by the natural, to reach
The spiritual beyond it,—fixes still
The type with mortal vision, to pierce through,
With eyes immortal, to the antitype

Some call the ideal,—better called the real,
And certain to be called so presently
When things shall have their names."

Again:—

"For we stand here, we,
If genuine artists, witnessing for God's
Complete, consummate, undivided work:
—That not a natural flower can grow on earth,
Without a flower upon the spiritual side,
Substantial, archetypal, all a-glow
With blossoming causes."

But I refrain from further observations at present, and would only remind Mr. Howitt, that *Elizabeth Barrett Browning is not only a decided believer in Spiritualism* from the very earliest manifestations, but she is so, under circumstances adverse to belief, in contradiction to the opinions of those around her.

As to her earlier poems, beautiful as they are, and full of spirituality—*The Drama of Exile, Isobel's Child, The Romaunt of Margaret* especially so—I believe they were all written long before her belief in Spiritualism was formed.

I feel that I have expressed very inadequately my impression, and offer these remarks very diffidently to one in every way so complete an adept both in the subject he advocates, and in poetry, as Mr. Howitt.

I beg to remain, dear Sir, sincerely yours,

RUTH.

We placed this letter in the hands of Mr. Howitt, and have received from him the following reply:—

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Sir,—I am much obliged by the perusal of the letter of "Ruth," in which Mrs. Browning is mentioned. I am glad to hear that Mrs. Browning has been for years a steadfast Spiritualist. It is worthy of her genius; and I wish I could feel that she had in her late *Poems before Congress*, ascended above the earthly plane. In fact, the letter of her friend only confirms my suggestion of her being whilst writing them, "biologized from below." A person biologized for the time, thinks, feels and perceives, precisely as his or her biologizer dictates. Is this not the case in Mrs. Browning's astonishing infatuation regarding Napoleon III.? Ruth, in her generous vindication, quotes a passage in which we are told by the poetess, that Louis Napoleon's "great deed was too great;" and that "we must wait" to form a correct judgment of him. Now, why should we wait? Has he not shown to all the world that his "great deed was too great" for him. That surely, must be the true reading. Had he, when he promised to "free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic," done so, and done so without other fee or reward but the satisfaction and the glory of a noble action, he would have ensured himself eternal fame. But he stopped short; left the Austrian still in Italy; and yet insisted on the payment of his half-done deeds by the lopping off Nice and Savoy from Italy, and joining them to France, laying bare the frontiers of Switzerland, and alarming all Europe. Since then, he has refused to sanction the accession of Tuscany and the Legation to Sardinia, though they have voluntarily acceded by his own mode of universal suffrage. Are these the characteristics of a great man? True, Italy has unexpectedly taken herself, in a great measure out of his hands; there is yet a prospect that she will become free—but not by Napoleon's act—but by the act and council of that Higher power who works with ambitious men differently to their intentions.

Need we wait to know that Napoleon by his 600,000 armed men, and by his enormous navy keeps all Europe armed to the teeth in a time of peace; keeps us and the continent at the enormous expenditure of war in a time of peace; thus exhausts all the energies of the people in support of a crushing taxation, and retards civilization and pushes back Christianity by founding the Moloch spirit of destruction? What we wait for is to be well rid of the Napoleon nuisance; and Spurgeon, in his letter from Baden-Baden, gives us hope that we shall not wait

for ever. Europe sees with reviving cheerfulness that God, by that in disease which is wasting the disturber, will ere long give her relief.

Much as I admire the warm feeling which has prompted Ruth to s for her friend, Mrs. Browning, I cannot think that she has mended the by her explanation, that *The Curse for a Nation* was aimed at the United and was first published in an anti-slavery publication, and then put "pro as the London *gamins* say, into *The Poems before Congress*. Thus it that this "curse" is kept by the brilliant and energetic poetess, as a cannon which she fires off according to circumstances. Having do against the Americans, it was mounted on her Italian battery, and dis against England. If not against England, why put into that battery at

Let us trust that as the liberty-loving poetess is a staunch Spiritual will learn what Spiritualists are early compelled to learn, "to discern Had "the angel" come to me, as Mrs. Browning says he did to her, and I write a curse, whether on an individual, or on a nation, I should ha "Get thee behind me, Satan! for I am a Christian, and my religion says, AND CURSE NOT." Nothing is so requisite for Spiritualist or Christian, can be a distinction betwixt those two names, as to be on the guard imposing spirits; and if we are to take this "curse," as a *bonâ fide* communication, which it professes to be, and of which it certainly has t —"This is the curse! Write;"—there cannot be a doubt but that it ca a false and anti-Christian source. Cursing is no part of Christianity. I confirms my supposition that the extraordinary fascination in favour of man who disturbs all Europe, is precisely a demoniac spell, impressed pose to becloud and mislead, and if possible, destroy the genius of the poetess. Every Spiritualist ought to pray for her enfranchisement. Once discharged of this unfortunate bewitchment which makes her bet continually exclaim, "Why will she do these things?" and her mind o to the influences of more heavenly and friendly spirits, we might ex higher and more potential strains from her pen than we have received b May it be so.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOW

THE UNIVERSAL METAMORPHOSIS.—If a wafer be laid on a surface of metal, which is then breathed upon, and if, when the moisture of the be evaporated, the wafer be shaken off, we shall find that the whole surface is not as it was before, although our senses can detect no dif for if we breathe again upon it the surface will be moist everywhere ex the spot previously sheltered by the wafer, which will now appear as a image on the surface. Again and again we breathe, and the moisture eva; but still the spectral wafer re-appears. This experiment succeeds lapse of many months, if the metal be carefully put aside where its cannot be disturbed. If a sheet of paper on which a key has been laid posed for some minutes to the sunshine, and then instantaneously viewe dark, the key being removed, a fading spectre of the key will be visible. I paper be put aside for many months where nothing can disturb it, and darkness be laid on a plate of hot metal—the spectre of the key will again In the case of bodies more highly phosphorescent than paper, the spec many different objects which may have been laid on it in succession warming, emerge in their proper order. This is equally true of our bod our minds. We are involved in the universal metamorphosis. Nothing us wholly as it found us. Every man we meet, every book we read, picture or landscape we see, every word or tone we hear, mingles with ou and modifies it. There are cases on record of ignorant women, in st insanity, uttering Greek and Hebrew phrases, which in past years the heard their masters utter, without, of course, comprehending them. tones had long been forgotten; the traces were so faint that, under on conditions, they were invisible; but these traces were there, and in the i light of cerebral excitement they started into prominence, just as the s image of the key started into sight on the application of heat. It is thu all the influences to which we are subjected.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

A RAP ON THE KNUCKLES.*

"There's two or three of us have seen strange sights."—*Julius Cæsar*.

"WHAT I want," says the hard-headed Mr. Gradgrind, "is facts;" and that is precisely what the conductors and readers of the Magazine have required from the beginning. The facts that come before we record as plainly as possible, carefully refraining from any ornamentation to make them "look pretty" to the eye, and studiously abstaining from spicing them with those hot exciting zests, which are only used to stimulate a morbid appetite for the marvellous. Others we leave the practice of that literary millinery, which consists in embroidering the raw material of truth with fantastic needle-work, and overlaying the experiences of every-day life with the ornamental imagery of every-week manufacture. It is the special object of this publication, to enlighten rather than to entertain its readers, and whilst in the *Spiritual Magazine* our pages are illustrated with the facts "*plain*," we contentedly leave that lively periodical *All the Year Round* to present them to the public according to the popular tariff of "*twopence coloured*."

But still, as the sagacious Mr. Gradgrind observed, "what we want is facts;" and when these facts especially interest ourselves, we would much rather not see them distorted.

In number sixty-six of that publication, conducted by Mr. Charles Dickens, and dated Saturday, July 28, 1860; there appeared an article entitled "Modern Magic," professing to give a veracious account of some manifestations that recently took place at the rooms of Mrs. Marshall, in Red Lion Street, Holborn. As the writer of these lines happened accidentally to be present when the writer of that article witnessed the things to which he refers as proofs of trickery on the part of the mediums, and of humiliating self-delusion on the part of the believers, who were in his company on that evening, it may be worth while considering whether another version might not be given with more advantage to the cause of truth, though it will be found less elaborated by fancy. It is only evidence against evidence; but the old fable of the two knights with the gold and silver sides of the shield, may be remembered as likely to assist those who would arrive at a fair conclusion. It is not for the present writer to impugn the veracity of his literary co-labourer; on the contrary, he gives the author of

* The writer of this article, to whom we have appealed to give a true version of the distorted statement in Mr. Dickens's *All the Year Round*, is well known to both the writers and readers of our friend *Punch*. He is himself one of the most gifted periodical writers of the day, and as well known in literary circles as Mr. Dickens himself.—EDITOR.

that article full credit for believing that he has fairly, truthfully and without prejudice, described all that came within his experience on the evening in question. As, however, much remains to be added that he may not have seen, and more remains to be corrected in the record of what he *believes* himself to have seen, it will be the easiest way of enabling him to arrive at what we are evidently both in search of, to supply those omissions which—inadvertent of course—were made in the article, and to set the author right in those respects where he has unfortunately fallen into error. To render the following statement more easily understood, it will be as well now to speak of what occurred in the first person.

Judging from the point where the author of "Modern Magic" takes up the position of an eye-witness, there could have been little difference in the period of our arrival, for when I entered with a couple of friends, "a clergyman was interrogating the spirits, and seemingly much edified by their answers." The whole party was then assembled, with the exception of a gentleman I had called upon, and who came a quarter of an hour afterwards, and finding the circle already formed, we remained quiet observers of what was taking place.

The author of "Modern Magic" must, therefore, have seen the clergyman place the Bible on the floor under the table, and heard its leaves so strangely turned over, and witnessed the fact of the page in the Book of Joshua being so curiously turned down at the 15th chapter, verses 19 and 20, though he discreetly passes over the inexplicable manner in which this was accomplished. The clergyman frankly admitted that they bore on the subject of his last week's lectures, and anybody who will refer to the texts in question will see that the first line, "Who answered give me a blessing" is not altogether very inappropriate when a presumed spirit yet hovering round our earth-sphere is invoked and a clergyman is the invoker. However, to one who was evidently seeing these things for the first time, and who was quite unaware that the leaves of books have been repeatedly turned over under similar circumstances in a way that precludes all possibility of deception, and that pages have been turned down exactly in accordance with mental directions, the experiment may not have been "very satisfactory." The momentary withdrawal of the medium from the circle, caused by the ringing of the bell of my delayed friend, now occurred, and it was of course at this time that the author of "Modern Magic" took the opportunity of trying the little tipping experiment on his own account, with what skill or success I am unable to say as my attention was then diverted by the entrance of the gentleman I had been expecting. The name then spelt out by the alphabet was, I believe, intended for myself as I have been frequently

requested in this way to form one of the circle, and I was then standing behind the gentleman the raps indicated, but as this only amounts to conjecture I merely mention it by the way. When, however, the incident is wound up rather abruptly with the remark "so much for even the common phenomenon of this medium's thought-reading," I would beg to observe that in the first place a phenomenon is not common, in the second that thought-reading is not a common phenomenon, and in the third that no one ever heard or supposed that "this medium" had the faculty of thought-reading at all. Like the famous dictionary definition of the crab being "a red fish that walks backwards," when it was not red, not a fish, and did not walk backwards, so the conclusion arrived at by the author of the article is only wrong in the three particulars mentioned.

We now come to the paper and the tray; never, in my opinion, very conclusive to those who hear the "ticks" upon them for the first time, but certainly not produced by the simple and fraudulent means conjectured by the gentleman who so daringly—might I not add libellously—ascribes them to the clumsy manipulation of an impostor and a swindler. It is difficult for the finger and thumb holding the tray not to follow its sudden movements, but whilst granting that the appearance of what was done might be as described, I can assure the narrator that there is no necessity at least for any exhibition of this subtle kind of muscular Christianity.

The next paragraph runs thus:—"Then the table reared itself up and sustained itself in the air for some seconds; but again the medium's thumbs were underneath, and her knee was against the top. This I also *most distinctly saw*—for she is not very accomplished yet in sleight-of-hand, and a very little careful observation can detect the manner of her tricks." Now if the gentleman who wrote these lines will place himself before a round table of the same weight and proportions, and, sitting down, will put his thumbs as described underneath the ledge of the table; and raise it by putting his knee against the top, he will find that this is only to be accomplished by crossing one leg over the other to obtain a purchase; that the thumbs might just as well be upon the table as under it; and that, after all, if the table had to be elevated by deceptive means the foot might be much more effectively and unobtrusively employed. After having so repeatedly played these "tricks," the medium must have been, indeed, more stupid at sleight-of-hand than the author supposes, not to have produced the same effect by a much simpler process. There may have been the "knee," but the "*plus ultra*" would have been found too, or nothing could surpass the stupidity of those who have some hundreds of times seen the said table rise

in the air with nothing but a few fingers resting lightly up surface, and all their knees better occupied in preserving perpendicularity of the human form, than in pushing up a top which, as anybody would discover who makes the experiment, would lead to a singularly ridiculous hopping about principal operator.

"I was then touched underneath the table. My arm suddenly grasped by something flexible and springy but muscular." *Clearly then it was not a grasp of the medium's booted foot.* "Others were grasped too; all but my friend's feet were tucked away under the chair, and so were out of line of the medium's foot." As it was confessedly not the medium (which is muscular), this ought to have made no difference; but it is evidently a slip of the pen; and in a later edition of this article we shall probably see "*erratum*;" for it should read "*apparatus*." The writer proceeds:—"And all the while this was going on I felt the young lady's knee work up and down against mine, as each person cried out he was touched, as if he pulled the strings of her puppets at her will." This again, a mechanical agency worked by the movement of the medium's leg, and when we remember that we have been previously told of "the total cessation every time the medium, the spirit, the candle streamed down stairs to answer the door," we can see those cunning at the fabrication of such machinery to suggest that they would make any apparatus of the kind that could be worked by a simple up-and-down movement of the knee, worn with detection under the clothes, adjusted at a moment's notice when required, and after having been directed with the greatest precision where wanted, be so quickly and neatly re-adjusted and put away that it should never be discovered in any of the numerous wanderings of the wearer on her visits to the street-door. I might parenthetically observe that on one occasion last year at a private house in Percy Street, Bedford Square, when the "touchings" were unusually marked, and when a direct admission was made that machinery was the cause, both the medium and I immediately underwent a strict examination by a family jury of matrons, impanelled for the purpose, and that a verdict of "guilty" was triumphantly recorded in their favour.

"Then an old badly-tuned guitar was held by the clergyman and played under the table." I admit the antiquity of the instrument, and readily acknowledge if it had been tuned at all, which I doubt, it had been tuned very badly. "The clergyman played the Old Hundredth in a low and tremulous voice, and while he struck a few simple chords were struck out, such as would have served for anything." This shows some tact, at least, on the part of the invisible accompanist. "But I deny that there was any attitudinizing."

known melody in the music or that it was anything more than could have been produced by sweeping the hand or foot over the strings at certain intervals." The hands were all upon the table, and as the clergyman was placed at the part of the table farthest from the medium, the foot—that wonderful foot—must have been stretched right across the legs of the other sitters to reach the instrument, and then have got its boot off and on again without attracting any notice in the progress, yet we are to be satisfied with the easy explanation that "It was a simple string sound, such as could have been easily effected by drawing the toes over the strings." !!!

"The light was now put out, and the spirits rapped us all to another, and more commodious part of the room, where they had promised to show the hands." I was now able to take a more active share in the proceedings, and for a short time sat next to the clergyman, who was much interested in the matter, and who, though by no means convinced of the anti-diabolical nature of these intelligences, had seen quite enough on this and other occasions to convince him that they were ultra mundane. "A double circle was formed, and when we were fairly placed, which was not until we had gone through a great deal of trouble and annoyance,—for the spirits were capricious and full of fancies and caprices, and would not have any one too near, but drove one over-anxious gentleman clean away from the place where they were to show"—as I surmise, the author of "Modern Magic"—

"the mediums got settled, and the spirits seemed to be content." During these changes of position, which will be well understood by those in the habit of attending similar meetings, I was placed at the extreme end of the semi-circle now formed round the table, and with about eighteen inches of vacant space between myself and the medium. How the small bell was then set running about the room, and rising as it went, is truthfully referred to; but before the bell "seemed to fall over on its side and the spirits rapped out their dismissal, and the *séance* was at an end," the following occurred. I was, as usual when occupying this position, repeatedly stroked by invisible agency from the hip downwards, as if supplying power for the exhibition of the spirit-hand, and when the faint phosphorescent light of the now familiar phantom fingers rose with the bell in their grasp and placed it on my knee, I, with pardonable nervousness, checked by an effort of the will its further advance, and at the same time involuntarily drew the attention of the company to the circumstance, when the bell rolled away from me, and we broke up the circle. Since then, I have repeatedly seen the spirit-hand, in common with others who have accompanied me, so that delusion is altogether out of the question; but as on that evening I was the only one who could afford

evidence of its apparition, I do not blame the writer for omitting any mention of what he may have considered was the result only of an over-wrought imagination.

It was whilst we were arranging for leaving the smaller table for the larger one, at an earlier period of the evening, that the almost-forgotten incident occurred which I find thus described:—"Two gentlemen"—I was myself one of them—the other was a stranger—"were asked to agree between themselves on a certain moment by the clock,"—it was by my watch, held so that only ourselves could see it—"when the spirits would rap as soon as the minute hand reached the spot. They did so, and the raps did come at the very instant." This is pretty correctly stated, and I may here say that we agreed between ourselves the table should be tilted up when the movement of the seconds hand on the dial should pass 30, and again when it reached 60, which took place with the greatest accuracy on both occasions.

How all these facts on which I have briefly commented can be summarily disposed of as "a somewhat dull and most bare-faced imposition," it surpasses my understanding of the relationship existing between cause and effect to comprehend. It is said that "there was not one single thing performed that was not an open and a palpable deception," and yet we have not one single thing that occurred clearly explained by him. I have purposely confined myself in this commentary to that portion of the article in question which deals with things which I saw as well as the writer, and to which I can therefore quite as accurately testify. I will but add, that I am myself an indifferent amateur professor of the noble art of legerdemain, that I am thoroughly acquainted with all the modes by which the acknowledged celebrities in that art practise their diverting deceptions, that for five-and-twenty years it has been my vocation to contribute to newspapers and periodicals articles that ought to—and I hope have—peculiarly sharpened my faculties of observation, and that during eight years of careful study of what is called the phenomena of Spiritualism, and three years of close observation of its development in the physical manifestations exhibited at the rooms of the Marshalls, I have never yet been able to detect the slightest attempt at imposition. I have taken them without a moment's preparation to other houses where manifestations equally striking have occurred; I can bear testimony to their simplicity of living, and unaffected guilelessness of manner at their own abode; and however strange the facts may be which I have had to record as having happened in their presence, I can say of myself, in the words of the author from whom I have in this paper so extensively quoted, "I do not affect infallibility, but I believe that I am unprejudiced, and I know that I love truth."

In many private families where no paid medium is present, things quite as extraordinary I know to be of nightly occurrence. The admirable article, "Stranger than Fiction," in the *Cornhill Magazine*, with its proclaimed hundred thousand purchasers and its probable one million of readers, will spread through the length and breadth of the land a knowledge of what thousands besides myself daily find coming within their experience. The facts are accumulating on every side around us; and whether they harmonize with our individual beliefs or not, still facts they remain. That mystic movements should occur, and mysterious sounds be heard, when certain conditions are observed, and at no other time, may seem paradoxical; but as Mr. G. H. Lewes has justly observed in his interesting "Studies in Animal Life," recently published in the said *Cornhill Magazine*, "a paradox is far from being an absurdity, as some inaccurate writers would lead us to suppose, the word meaning simply 'contrary to what is thought.'—a meaning by no means equivalent to 'contrary to what is the fact!'" The application of this to the remarkable manifestations occurring in connection with what is called "Spiritualism," is too obvious to dwell upon. Many will yet live to regret the opposition which they have given to truths which are every hour gaining a firmer footing even on the slippery ground of this rolling orb, and will be glad to escape as discreetly as they can from the awkward dilemma in which they have hurriedly placed themselves. Writers have become compromised by publishing their immature conclusions at the first, and now they are perplexed how to deal with a subject which contradicts their past assertions and waylays them at every point. The "leek" must however be ultimately eaten, and the sooner it is done with a good grace, and with as little wry-face-making as possible, the better for the leek-eaters. I merely append my initials to this slight contribution to the cause of truth, but the editor has my full permission to make known the name thus indicated to any one who thinks he may thus obtain a more trustworthy guarantee for the strict veracity of the statements here put forward.

E. L. B.

A LAMENTABLE FACT.—It is a lamentable fact that, in spite of common sense and common prudence, Spiritualism, as it is called, is not losing ground in this country; on the contrary, it is flourishing and vigorous, and that not only among the ignorant and insane, but among men of repute, who might fairly be looked on as superior to any system of trickery so barefaced and so wicked. At this moment there are several literary circles in London who are lending their aid to the spread of the delusion, and we could name more than one eminent man who is a decided victim to it. *Séances* are frequent in the best circles; mediums are tolerated in the highest quarters; and even the Church does not fail to add its quota to the herd of the misguided and the deluded.—*The Brighton Herald*.

OLD BOOTY.

THERE is a general tendency in human nature to a belief in the supernatural—a tendency that cannot long at any time be wholly suppressed, but will find some mode of expression forcing its way through all material barriers, as the life-force in the growing tree forces a way for it, even through stone wall. It may, sometimes, be the fashion to deride all spirit-beliefs as a mark of weakness and superstition, though many of the wisest have believed them; but, after all, this scepticism is only a passing fashion—as much so as peg-tops and crinoline; and as the human form is not dependant on the caprices of tailors, milliners, and the *beau monde*, so, neither is Spiritualism dependant on the reigning fashion of opinion. As the tree may be bent from its natural shape, so, to meet and overcome the obstacles presented by the merely material mind, spiritual forces may be directed into what is generally regarded as new channels and the production of seemingly irregular and eccentric phenomena. If you will not look Spiritualism in the face when it presents itself in one shape, it will appear before you in another—perhaps a more startling one. If the churches ignore it, it becomes, as Mr. Dickens tells us, “the great drawing-room excitement of the day.” Banish it from science, it takes refuge in art, literature, the drama. The spiritual has always been a favourite element in works of imagination of the highest class. It enters into many of the most deservedly popular works of this class in our own day—witness *Jane Eyre*, *John Halifax*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and *Adam Bede*. If, as a formal proposition, you will not allow Spiritualism a lodgment in the intellect, it will find its way there through the sympathy of the affections. In less cultivated natures, something of the kind is still sought for to gratify the cravings of a natural instinct. It is the same element in the drama which, at the West End, draws the Queen and aristocracy to see the *Corsican Brothers*; and, at the largest theatre at the East End, nightly draws a crowded house to witness the performance of *Old Booty*. The narrative on which the last named drama is founded has been often published, among others, by John Wesley, in the *Arminian Magazine*; but as some of our readers may not have seen it, we reproduce it from the Appendix to the second volume of Ennemoser’s *History of Magic*. It is headed:—

MR. BOOTY AND THE SHIP’S CREW.

No circumstance connected with supernatural appearances has occasioned more altercation and controversy than the undermentioned. The narrative certainly has an air of overstrained credulity; nevertheless, the affair is curious, and the coincidence very remarkable, especially as it was a *salvo* for Captain

Barnaby. The former part of this narrative is transcribed from Captain Spinks's journal, or logbook, and the latter from the King's Bench Records for the time being.

"Tuesday, May the 12th, this day the wind S.S.W. and a little before four in the afternoon, we anchored in Manser road, where lay Captains Bristo, Brian, and Barnaby, all of them bound to Lucera to load. Wednesday, May the 13th, we weighed anchor, and in the afternoon I went on board of Captain Barnaby, and about two o'clock we sailed all of us for the island of Lucera, wind W.S.W. and bitter weather. Thursday, the 14th about two o'clock, we saw the island, and all came to an anchor in twelve fathom water, the wind W.S.W., and on the 15th day of May, we had an observation of Mr. Booty in the following manner:—Captains Bristo, Brian, and Barnaby, went on shore shooting coluces on Stromboli; when we had done, we called our men together, and about fourteen minutes after three in the afternoon, to our great surprise, we saw two men, run by us with amazing swiftness: Captain Barnaby said, 'Lord bless me, the fastest man looks like my next-door neighbour, old Booty,' but said he did not know the other that was behind. Booty was dressed in grey clothes, and the other behind in black; we saw them run into the burning mountain in the midst of the flames, on which we heard a terrible noise too horrible to be described: Captain Barnaby then desired us to look at our watches, pen the time down in our pocket-books, and enter it in our journals, which we accordingly did.

"When we were laden, we all sailed for England, and arrived at Gravesend, on the 6th of October, 1687. Mrs. Barnaby and Mrs. Brian came to congratulate our safe arrival, and after some discourse, Captain Barnaby's wife said, 'My dear, I have got some news to tell you; old Booty is dead.' He swore an oath, and said 'We all saw him run into hell.' Some time afterwards, Mrs. Barnaby met with a lady of her acquaintance in London, and told her what her husband had seen concerning Mr. Booty; it came to Mrs. Booty's ears, and she arrested Captain Barnaby in £1,000 action. He gave bail, and it came to trial at the Court of King's Bench, where Mr. Booty's clothes were brought into Court. The sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died, swore to the time when he died, and we swore to our journals, and they agreed within two minutes: twelve of our men swore that the buttons of his coat were covered with the same grey cloth as his coat, and it appeared to be so: the jury asked Mr. Spinks if he knew Mr. Booty in his lifetime; he said he never saw him till he saw him run by him into the burning mountain. The judge then said, 'Lord grant that I may never see the sight that you have seen; one, two, or three may be mistaken, but twenty or thirty cannot.' So the widow lost the cause.

"N.B. It is now in the records at Westminster.

"James the Second, 1687,
 "Herbert, Chief Justice,
 "Wythens,
 "Holloway,
 "And Wright, } Justices."

SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT IN THE CASE OF "PUNCH."

"As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, am not I in sport?"—*Proverbs xxvi., 18.*

Spiritualism makes me as happy as I possibly can be on earth. Everything looks beautiful in its radiant light; all nature is melody, and every soul to me is an organ of celestial music.—*P. B. Randolph.*

Notices of New Books.

Spiritual Manifestations.—"Stranger than Fiction."

Cornhill Magazine.

THE *Cornhill Magazine*, with its sale of a hundred thousand copies, has now placed the facts of Spiritualism fairly before the British public.

Stranger than Fiction, is the title of an article in its last number in which the writer sets forth, in sober, measured language, the spiritual manifestations which he has witnessed through the mediumship of Mr. Home. This narrative fully confirms all the statements of similar spiritual phenomena recorded from time to time in this *Magazine*, and elsewhere, by those who have witnessed them. It has fairly taken the wind out of some of our contemporary poraries. One, with that remarkable courtesy which British journalists pay to each other, accuses the writer of *fiction*; another thinks it "a very strange paper," but suspects it is "an entire hoax;" and the rest follow suite, more or less, in the same strain. They appear to be totally ignorant or oblivious of the cumulative testimony of a great number of intelligent and independent witnesses to the same classes of phenomena, and they equally overlook the circumstance that Mr. Thackeray, in a foot-note to the article, avers that, "As editor of this *Magazine*, I can vouch for the good faith and honourable character of our correspondent, a friend of twenty-five years' standing." The writer is a literary gentleman of the highest repute, as indeed his article would at once prove him to be, and we only wish that we were at liberty to give him name, that the public might recognise in it one of their greatest favorites. We especially commend this article to the readers of *Punch* and *All the Year Round*, and to those among them particular (if any such weak-minded people can be found), who may have been misled by the ribaldry and perversions of truth which those publications contain. We regret that we are not at liberty to reproduce the article in *extenso*, but we present most of its essential features, and refer the reader to the *Cornhill* itself for the whole article.

In regard to "extraordinary phenomena upon the evidence of others," the writer acknowledges that scepticism, within certain limits, is legitimate, and has its uses. He tells us that:—

"Scepticism is one of the safe and cautious characteristics of the English people. Nothing is believed at first; and this habitual resistance to novelty might be applauded as a sound instinct, if it did not sometimes obstruct the progress of knowledge. The most important discoveries have passed through

this habitual ordeal of derision and antagonism. Whatever has a tendency to disturb received notions, or to go beyond the precincts of our present intelligence, is denounced, without inquiry, and out of the shallowest of all kinds of conventionalism, as false, absurd, and dangerous. Let us suffer ourselves to be rebuked in these exercises of intellectual pride by remembering that in Shakspeare's time the sun was believed to go round the earth; that the laws of gravitation, and the circulation of the blood were found out only yesterday; this wonderful, wise world of ours being fearfully ignorant of both throughout the long ages upon ages of its previous existence; and that it was only this morning we hit upon the uses of steam by land and sea, and ran our girdle of electricity round the limbs of the globe. Who says we must stop here? If we have lived for thousands of years in a state of absolute unconsciousness of the arterial system that was coursing through our bodies, who shall presume to say that there is nothing more to be learned in time to come?"

Of the "extraordinary phenomena" which he has seen and heard he gives the following account:—

"For my first experience, I must take the reader into a large drawing-room. The time is morning; and the only persons present are two ladies. It is proper to anticipate any question that may arise at this point, by premising that the circumstances under which the *séance* took place precluded all suspicion of confederacy or trickery of any kind. There was nobody in the apartment capable of practising a deception, and no conceivable object to be gained by it. Being anxious to observe the proceedings in the first instance, before I took part in them, I sat at a distance of about six or seven feet from the tolerably heavy sofa table at which the ladies were placed, one at the end farthest from me, and the other at the side. It is important to note their positions, which show that if their hands have any influence upon the movements of the table, such influence must have operated at right angles, or in opposite directions. Their hands were placed very lightly on the table, and for three or four minutes we all remained perfectly still. The popular impression that it is indispensable for the hands of the sitters to touch each other, and that they must all concentrate their attention on the hoped-for manifestation, is, like a multitude of other absurdities, that are about the subject, entirely unfounded. No such conditions are necessary; and instead of concentrating the attention, it is often found desirable to divert attention to other matters, on grounds which, at present, may be considered experimental rather than positive.

"After we had waited a few minutes, the table began to rock gently to and fro. The undulating motion gradually increased, and was quickly followed by tickling knocks underneath, resembling the sounds that might be produced by rapid blows from the end of a pencil-case. The ladies were now *en rapport* with what may be called, to use a general term, the invisible agency by which the motions and noises were presumed to be produced. The mode of communication is primitive enough. Questions are asked by the sitters, and answered by knocks; three indicating the affirmative, one the negative, and two, the doubtful, expressing such meanings as "perhaps," "presently," "not quite," &c., according to the nature of the enquiry. When the answer requires many words, or when an original communication or "message" is to be conveyed, the alphabet is resorted to, and, the letters being repeated aloud, three knocks respond to each letter in the order in which it is to be taken down to spell out the sentence. People who have witnessed these processes will consider the description of them trivial; but I am not addressing the initiated. What is chiefly wanted in the attempt to render a clear account of unusual phenomena, is to light up every step of the way to the final results; but persons familiar with the *modus operandi* are apt to think that everybody else is so, and to leave out those particulars which in reality constitute the very essence of the interest. The employment of the alphabet is comparatively tedious; but it is surprising with what celerity those who are accustomed to it catch the answers and jot them down. Nor is there anything much more curious in the whole range of the manifestations than the precision and swiftness with which each letter is seized, and struck under the table, at the instant it is pronounced. During the whole time when these

communications are going forward, it should be remembered that every person's hands are displayed on the surface of the table, so that no manipulation can take place beneath.

"In a little while, at my request, a question was put as to whether I might join the *séance*. The answer was given in the affirmative, with tumultuous energy, and at the same moment the table commenced a vigorous movement across the room, till it came up quite close to me. The ladies were obliged to leave their chairs to keep up with it. The intimation understood to be conveyed by this movement was satisfaction at my accession to the *séance*; which now commenced, and at which a multitude of raps were delivered, the table undergoing throes of corresponding variety. In accordance with an instruction received through the alphabet, we finally removed to a small round table, which stood on a slender pillar, terminating in three claws. Here the noises and motions thronged upon us faster and faster, assuming, for the most part, a new character. Sometimes the knocks were gentle and almost timid, and the swaying backward and forwards of the little table was slow and dilatory; but presently came another phase of activity. The table seemed to be inspired with the most riotous animal spirits. I confess that, with the utmost sobriety of intention, I know no other way to describe the impression made upon me by the antics in which it indulged. It pitched about with a velocity which flung off our hands from side to side, as fast as we attempted to place them; and the general effect produced was that of a wild, rollicking glee, which fairly infected the three sitters, in spite of all their efforts to maintain a becoming gravity. But this was only preliminary to a demonstration of a much more singular kind.

"While we were seated at this table, we barely touched it with the tips of our fingers. I was anxious to satisfy myself with respect to the involuntary pressure which has been attributed to the imposition of hands. In this case there was none. My friends kindly gratified my request to avoid resting the slightest weight on the table; and we held our hands pointing downwards, with merely the nails touching the wood. Not only was this light contact inadequate to produce the violent evolutions that took place, but the evolutions were so irregular and perplexing, that we could not have produced them by premeditation. Presently, however, we had conclusive proofs that the vivacity of the table did not require any help from us.

"Turning suddenly over on one side, it sank to the floor. In this horizontal position it glided slowly towards a table which stood close to a large ottoman in the centre of the room. We had much trouble in following it, the apartment being crowded with furniture, and our difficulty was considerably increased by being obliged to keep up with it in a stooping attitude. Part of the journey was performed alone, and we were never able to reach it at any time together. Using the leg of the table as a fulcrum, it directed its claws towards the ottoman, which it attempted to ascend, by inserting one claw in the side, then turning half way round to make good another step, and so on. It slipped down at the first attempt, but again quietly resumed its task. It was exactly like a child trying to climb up a height. All this time we hardly touched it, being afraid of interfering with their movements, and, above all things, determined not to assist them. At last, by careful and persevering efforts, it accomplished the top of the ottoman, and stood on the summit of the column in the centre, from whence in a few minutes it descended to the floor by a similar process.

"It is not to be expected that any person who is a stranger to the phenomena should read such a story as this with complacency. It would be irrational to anticipate a patient hearing for a traveller who should tell you that he was once addressed in good English by an oak tree; and talking trees are not a whit more improbable than talking tables. Yet here is a fact which undoubtedly took place, and which cannot be referred to any known physical or mechanical force. It is not a satisfactory answer to those who have seen such things, to say that they are impossible; since, in such cases, it is evident that the impossibility of a thing does not prevent it from happening.

"Upon many subsequent occasions I have witnessed phenomena of a similar nature, and others of a much more startling character; in some instances, where the local conditions varied considerably, and in all, where the circumstances

under which the *séances* took place were wholly inconsistent with the practice of trickery or imposition. This last statement is of infinite importance, in an enquiry of this kind. Every novelty in science, and even in literature and art is exposed to the invasion of pretenders and charlatans. Every new truth has to pick its first steps through frauds. But new truths, or strange phenomena, are no more responsible for the quackeries that are put forward in their name by impostors, than for the illogical absurdities that are published in their defence by enthusiastic believers. Should chemistry and astronomy be ignored, because they were eliminated out of the half-fanatical and half-fraudulent empiricism of the alchemists and astrologers? It is the province of men of science to investigate alleged phenomena irrespective of extrinsic incidents, and to clear away all impediments on their progress to pure truth, as nature casts aside the rubbish on the descent of the glacier.

"The opportunities I have enjoyed of examining the phenomena to which I am referring, were such as a charlatan could hardly have tampered with, even had there been a person present who could be suspected of attempting a deception. Houses into which it would be impossible to introduce mechanical contrivances, to lay down electric wires, or to make preparations for the most ordinary tricks of illusion, without the assent or knowledge of the proprietors, and to which no previous access could be obtained for purposes of that description; houses in which *séances* were held for the first time, without premeditation, and, therefore, without pre-arrangement; and, above all, houses of people who were unbelievers, who were more curious than earnest, and who would be more inclined to lay traps for the exposure of frauds, than to help in the production of them;—are not the most likely places to be selected by the conjuror for the exhibition of his legerdemain.

"When I saw a table, at which two ladies were seated, moving towards me without any adequate impulse being imparted to it by visible means, I thought the fact sufficiently extraordinary; but my wonder abated when, on subsequent occasions, I saw tables move apparently of their own volition, there being no persons near them; large sofas advance from the walls against which they stood; and chairs, sometimes occupied, and sometimes empty, shift their places for the distance of a foot or a yard, in some cases easily, and in others with a slow, laborious movement. The catalogue might be readily enlarged, but the accumulation of examples would throw no additional light on the subject. To this particular class of phenomena may be added an illustration of a different order, which, like these, would seem to require mechanical aids, but in this instance of vast power and extent. On the first occasion when I experienced the effect I am about to describe, there were five persons in the room. In other places, where it occurred subsequently, there were seven or more. The architecture of the houses in each case was wholly dissimilar, both as to the area and height of the apartments, and the age, size, and strength of the buildings. We were seated at a table at which some singular phenomena, accompanied by loud knocks on the walls and floor, had just occurred, when we became conscious of a strange vibration that palpitated through the entire room. We listened and watched attentively. The vibration grew stronger and stronger. It was palpably under our feet. Our chairs shook, and the floor trembled violently. The effect was exactly like the throbbing and heaving which might be supposed to take place in a house in the tropics during the moment immediately preceding an earthquake. This violent motion continued for two or three minutes, then gradually subsided and ceased. Every person present was equally affected by it on each occasion when it occurred. To produce such a result by machinery might be possible if the introduction of the machinery itself were possible. But the supposition involves a difficulty somewhat similar to that of Mr. Knickerbocker's theory of the earth standing on the back of a tortoise, which might be an excellent theory if we could only ascertain what the tortoise stood upon."

The following is an example of what the writer says—"I have seen several times, the table rising entirely unsupported into the air."

"Eight persons are seated round a table with their hands placed upon it. In the midst of the usual undulations a lull suddenly sets in. A new motion in preparation; and presently the table rises with a slight jerk, and steady mounts till it attains such a height as to render it necessary for the company to stand up, in order still to be able to keep their hands with ease in contact with the surface, although that is not absolutely necessary. As there are some persons who have not witnessed this movement before, a desire is expressed to examine the floor, and a gentleman goes under the table for that purpose. The whole space, open to the view of the entire party, is clear. From the carpet to the edge of the table there is a blank interval of perhaps two feet, perhaps three; nobody has thought of providing a means of measuring it, and we must take it by guess. The carpet is examined, and the legs and under surface of the table are explored, but without result. There is no trace of any connection between the floor and the table; nor can it be conceived how there can be any, as the table had shifted to this spot from the place where it originally stood only a few minutes before. The inspection is hurried and brief, but comprehensive enough to satisfy us that the table has not been raised by mechanical means from below, and such means could not be applied from above without the certainty of immediate detection. In its ascent, the table has swung out of its orbit, but re-adjusts itself before it begins to descend, and, resuming its vertical position, it comes down on the spot from whence it rose, without disturbing the chairs. We cannot calculate the duration of time it has remained suspended in the air. It may be one minute, two minutes, or more. Your attention is too much absorbed to permit you to consult a watch; and, moreover, you are unwilling to turn away your eyes, lest you should lose some fresh manifestation. The downward motion is slow, and, if I may use the expression, graceful; and it reaches the ground with a dreamy softness that renders its touch almost imperceptible.

"Of a somewhat similar character is another movement, in some respects more curious, and certainly opening a stranger field for speculation. Here, in drawing the picture from the reality, we must imagine the company seated round a large, heavy, round table, resting on a pillar with three massive claws, and covered with a velvet cloth, over which books, a vase of flowers, and other objects are scattered. In the midst of the *séance* the table abruptly forces its way across the room, pushing on before it the persons who are on the opposite side to that from whence the impetus is derived, and who are thrown into confusion by the unexpectedness and rapidity with which they are driven backwards on their chairs. The table is at last stopped by a sofa; and as the persons on that side extricate themselves, a space remains open of a few inches between the table and the sofa. All is now still; but the pause is of short duration. The table soon begins to throb and tremble; cracks are heard in the wood; loud knocks succeed; and presently, after surging backwards and forwards two or four times, as if it were preparing for a greater effort, it rears itself up on one side, until the surface forms an inclined plane, at an angle of about 45 degrees. In this attitude it stops. According to ordinary experience everything on the table must slide off, or topple over; but nothing stirs. The vase of flowers, the books, the little ornaments are as motionless as if they were fixed in their places. We agree to take away our hands, to throw up the ends of the cover, so as to leave the entire round pillar and claws exposed, and to remove our chairs to a little distance, that we may have a more complete command of a phenomenon which, in its marvellous development at least, is, I believe, new to us all. Our withdrawal makes no difference whatever: and now we see distinctly on all sides the precise pose of the table, which looks, like the Tower of Pisa, as if it must inevitably tumble over. With a view to urge the investigation as far as it can be carried, a wish is whispered for a still more conclusive display of the power by which this extraordinary result has been accomplished. The demand is at once complied with. The table leans more and more out of the perpendicular; two of the three claws are high above the ground; and finally, the whole structure stands on the extreme tip of a single claw, fearfully overbalanced, but maintaining itself as steadily as if it were all one solid mass, instead of being freighted with a number of loose articles, and as if the position had been planned

in strict accordance with the laws of equilibrium and attraction, instead of involving an inexplicable violation of both."

From these phenomena the writer, still stating only what took place in his own presence, and observing the "most literal accuracy," passes on to narrate other manifestations of a still more startling character, in which the table, hitherto the principal figure in these scenes "becomes subordinate to agencies of a more subtle character."

"As we advance, mysteries thicken upon us, and allowances must be made for the difficulty of describing incidents beyond the pale of material experiences, without seeming to use the language of fancy or exaggeration. I will include in one *séance* all the circumstances of this nature which it appears to me desirable to record at present, observing, as before, the most literal accuracy I can in setting them before the reader, and stating nothing that has not actually taken place in my own presence.

"Our party of eight or nine assembled in the evening, and the *séance* commenced about nine o'clock, in a spacious drawing-room, of which it is necessary to give some account in order to render perfectly intelligible what is to follow. In different parts of the room were sofas and ottomans, and in the centre a round table at which it was arranged that the *séance* should be held. Between this table and three windows, which filled up one side of the room, there was a large sofa. The windows were draped with thick curtains, and protected by spring-blinds. The space in front of the centre window was unoccupied; but the windows on the right and left were filled by geranium stands."

Incidentally, the writer, in speaking of Mr. Home, tries to disabuse the mind of the reader of the false impressions he may have received of that gentleman, from the "absurd stories" circulated through "the paragraph romances we read in the newspapers," and remarks of him that "he is probably the last person in a room full of people whom you would fix upon as the spiritual confidant of a much more mysterious personage than he is himself, the Emperor Louis Napoleon; and it may be added, that you would be as little likely to find out who he is by his conversation as by his appearance, since he rarely speaks on the subject with which his name and career are so closely associated, unless when it is introduced by others."

After this slight digression from his narrative, the writer continues—

"We will now return to the *séance*, which commenced in the centre of the room. I pass over the preliminary vibrations to come at once to the more remarkable features in the evening. From unmistakeable indications, conveyed in different forms, the table was finally removed to the centre window, displacing the sofa, which was wheeled away. The deep space between the table and the window was unoccupied, but the rest of the circle was closely packed. Some sheets of white paper, and two or three lead pencils, an accordion, a small hand-bell, and a few flowers were placed upon the table. Sundry communications now took place, which I will not stop to describe; and at length, an intimation was received, through the usual channel of correspondence, that the lights must be extinguished. As this direction is understood to be given only when unusual manifestations are about to be made, it was followed by an interval of anxious suspense. There were lights on the walls, mantelpiece, and round-table, and the process of putting them out seemed tedious. When the

last was extinguished, a dead silence ensued, in which the tick of a watch could be heard.

"We must now have been in utter darkness, but for the pale light that came in through the window, and the flickering glare thrown fitfully over a part of the room by the fire which was rapidly sinking in the grate. We could see, but could scarcely distinguish our hands upon the table. A festoon of gleaming forms round the circle represented what we knew to be our faces. An occasional ray from the window now and then revealed the hazy outlines of the white sheets, and the misty bulk of the accordion. We knew these were placed, and could discover them with the slightest assistance. In the gray, cold light of a watery sky. The stillness of expectation that during the first few minutes of that visible darkness, was so profound that all the sounds of life that were heard, it might be an empty chamber.

"The table and the window, and the space between the table and the window engrossed all eyes. It was in that place everybody instinctively looked for revelation. Presently, the tassel of the cord of the spring-blind began to tremble. We could see it plainly against the sky, and attention being directed to the circumstance, every eye was upon the tassel. Slowly, and apparently with caution, or difficulty, the blind began to descend; the cord was evidently drawn, but the force applied to pull down the blind seemed feeble and uncertain. It succeeded, however, at last, and the room was thrown into deeper darkness than before. But our vision was becoming accustomed to it, and many things were growing palpable to us, although we could see nothing distinct. Several times, at intervals, the blind was raised and pulled down; but, as the movement appeared, the ultimate object seemed to be to diminish the light.

"A whisper passed round the table about hands having been seen. Unable to answer for what happened to others, I will speak only of what I observed myself. The table cover was drawn over my knees, as it was over those of others. I felt distinctly a twitch, several times repeated, at my knee. It was the sensation of a boy's hand, partly scratching, partly striking, and partly in play. It went away. Others described the same sensation; and the manner with which it frolicked, like Puck, under the table, now at one side and now at another, was surprising. Soon after, what seemed to be a large hand came under the table cover, and with the fingers clustered to a point, reached between me and the table. Somewhat too eager to satisfy my curiosity, I seized it, felt it very sensibly, but it went out like air in my grasp. I knew no analogy in connection with the sense of touch by which I could make the nature of that feeling intelligible. It was as palpable as any soft substance, velvet, or pulp; and at the touch it seemed as solid; but pressure reduced it to air.

"It was now suggested that one of the party should hold the hand that came under the table; which was no sooner done than it was taken away, and being rung at different points was finally returned, still under the table, in the hand of another person.

"While this was going forward the white sheets were seen moving, and gradually disappeared over the edge of the table. Long afterwards we saw them creasing and crumpling on the floor, and saw them returned again to the table; but there was no writing upon them. In the same way the flowers which lay near the edge were removed. The semblance of what seemed a hand, with white, long, and delicate fingers, rose up slowly in the darkness, and placing itself over a flower, suddenly vanished with it. This occurred two or three times, and although each appearance was not equally palpable to every person, there was no person who did not see some of them. The flowers were distributed in the manner in which they had been removed; a hand, of which the gleam was visible, slowly ascending from beneath the cover, and placing the flower in the hand for which it was intended. In the flower-stands by the adjoining window we could hear geranium blossoms snapped off, which afterwards were thrown to different persons.

"Still more extraordinary was that which followed, or rather which took place while we were watching this transfer of the flowers. Those who had been

and who were in the best position for catching the light upon the instrument; declared that they saw the accordion in motion. I could not. It was as black as pitch to me. But concentrating my attention on the spot where I supposed it to be, I soon perceived a dark mass rise awkwardly above the edge of the table, and then go down, the instrument emitting a single sound produced by its being struck against the table as it went over. It descended to the floor in silence; and a quarter of an hour afterwards, when we were engaged in observing some fresh phenomena, we heard the accordion beginning to play where it lay on the ground.

"Apart from the wonderful consideration of its being played without hands—no less wonderful was the fact of its being played in a narrow space which would not admit of its being drawn out with the requisite freedom to its full extent. We listened with suspended breath. The air was wild, and full of strange transitions; with a wail of the most pathetic sweetness running through it. The execution was no less remarkable for its delicacy than its power. When the notes swelled in some of the bold passages, the sound rolled through the room with an astounding reverberation; then, gently subsiding, sank into a strain of divine tenderness. But it was the close that touched the hearts, and drew the tears of the listeners. Milton dreamt of this wondrous termination when he wrote of 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' By what art the accordion was made to yield that dying note, let practical musicians determine. Our ears, that heard it, had never before been visited by 'a sound so fine.' It continued diminishing and diminishing, and stretching far away into distance and darkness, until the attenuated thread of sound became so exquisite that it was impossible at last to fix the moment when it ceased.

"That an instrument should be played without hands is a proposition which nobody can be expected to accept. The whole story will be referred to one of the categories under which the whole of these phenomena are consigned by 'common sense.' It will be discarded as a delusion, or a fraud. Either we imagined we heard it, and really did not hear it; or there was some one under the table, or some mechanism was set in motion to produce the result. Having made the statement, I feel that I am bound, as far as I can, to answer these objections, which I admit to be perfectly reasonable. Upon the likelihood of deception my testimony is obviously worth nothing. With respect to fraud, I may speak more confidently. It is scarcely necessary to say that in so small a circle, occupied by so many persons, who were inconveniently packed together, there was not room for a child of the size of a doll, or for the smallest piece of machinery to operate. But we need not speculate on what might be done by skilful contrivances in confines so narrow, since the question is removed out of the region of conjecture by the fact that, upon holding up the instrument myself in one hand, in the open room, with the full light upon it, similar strains were emitted, the regular action of the accordion going on without any visible agency. And I should add that, during the loud and vehement passages, it became so difficult to hold, in consequence of the extraordinary power with which it was played from below, that I was obliged to grasp the top with both hands. This experience was not a solitary one. I witnessed the same result on different occasions, when the instrument was held by others."

The concluding phenomenon of this remarkable *séance*, "takes us entirely out of that domain of the marvellous in which the media are inanimate objects."

"Mr. Home was seated next the window. Through the semi-darkness his head was dimly visible against the curtains, and his hands might be seen in a faint white heap before him. Presently, he said, in a quiet voice, 'My chair is moving—I am off the ground—don't notice me—talk of something else,' or words to that effect. It was very difficult to restrain the curiosity, not unmixed with a more serious feeling, which these few words awakened; but we talked, incoherently enough, upon some different topic. I was sitting nearly opposite Mr. Home, and I saw his hands disappear from the table, and his head vanish into the deep shadow beyond. In a moment or two more he spoke again. This

time his voice was in the air above our heads. He had risen from his chair to a height of four or five feet from the ground. As he ascended higher he described his position, which at first was perpendicular, and afterwards became horizontal. He said he felt as if he had been turned in the gentlest manner, as a child is turned in the arms of a nurse. In a moment or two more, he told us that he was going to pass across the window, against the gray, silvery light of which he would be visible. We watched in profound stillness, and saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air. He spoke to us as he passed, and told us that he would turn the reverse way, and recross the window; which he did. His own tranquil confidence in the safety of what seemed from below a situation of the most novel peril, gave confidence to everybody else; but, with the strongest nerves, it was impossible not to be conscious of a certain sensation of fear or awe. He hovered round the circle for several minutes, and passed, this time perpendicularly, over our heads. I heard his voice behind me in the air, and felt something light brush my chair. It was his foot, which he gave me leave to touch. Turning to the spot where it was on the top of the chair, I placed my hand gently upon it, when he uttered a cry of pain, and the foot was withdrawn quickly, with a palpable shudder. It was evidently not resting on the chair, but floating; and it sprang from the touch as a bird would. He now passed over to the farther extremity of the room, and we could judge by his voice of the altitude and distance he had attained. He had reached the ceiling, upon which he made a slight mark, and soon afterwards descended and resumed his place at the table. An incident which occurred during this aerial passage, and imparted a strange solemnity to it, was that the accordion, which we supposed to be on the ground under the window close to us, played a strain of wild pathos in the air from the most distant corner of the room."

In this narrative of facts "stranger than fiction," the writer prefers to "give the driest and most literal account" of what he saw and heard, rather than risk any "descriptions which, however true, might look like exaggerations;" and he therefore excludes all sights and sounds "which do not admit of satisfactory evidence," or which might be regarded as "the unconscious work of the imagination." But—

"Palpable facts witnessed by many people, stand on a widely different ground. If the proofs of their occurrence be perfectly legitimate, the nature of the facts themselves cannot be admitted as a valid reason for refusing to accept them as facts. Evidence, if it be otherwise trustworthy, is not invalidated by the unlikelihood of that which it attests. What is wanted here, then, is to treat facts as facts, and not to decide the question over the head of the evidence."

"To say that certain phenomena are incredible, is merely to say that they are inconsistent with the present state of our knowledge; but, knowing how imperfect our knowledge is, we are not, therefore, justified in asserting that they are impossible. The 'failures' which have occurred at *séances* are urged as proofs that the whole thing is a cheat. If such an argument be worth noticing it is sufficient to say that ten thousand failures do not disprove a single fact. But it must be evident that as we do not know the conditions of 'success,' we cannot draw any argument from 'failures.' We often hear people say that they might believe such a thing, if such a thing were to happen; making assent to a particular fact, by an odd sort of logic, depend upon the occurrence of something else. 'I will believe,' for example, says a philosopher of this stamp, 'that a table has risen from the ground, when I see the lamp-posts dancing quadrilles. Then, tables? Why do these things happen to tables?' Why, that is one of the very matters which it is desirable to investigate, but which we shall never know anything about so long as we ignore inquiry. And, above all, of what use are these wonderful manifestations? What do they prove? What benefit have they conferred on the world? Sir John Herschel has answered these questions with a weight of authority which is final. 'The

question, *Cui bono?* to what practical end and advantage do your researches tend?—is one which the speculative philosopher, who loves knowledge for its own sake, and enjoys, as a rational being should enjoy, the mere contemplation of harmonious and mutually dependent truths, can seldom hear without a sense of humiliation. He feels that there is a lofty and disinterested pleasure in his speculations, which ought to exempt them from such questioning. But,' adds Sir John, 'if he can bring himself to descend from this high but fair ground, and justify himself, his pursuits, and his pleasures in the eyes of those around him, he has only to point to the history of all science, where speculations, apparently the most unprofitable, have almost invariably been those from which the greatest practicable applications have emanated.'*

"The first thing to be done is to collect and verify facts. But this can never be done if we insist upon refusing to receive any facts, except such as shall appear to us likely to be true, according to the measure of our intelligence and knowledge. My object is to apply this truism to the case of the phenomena of which we have been speaking; an object which I hope will not be overlooked by any persons who may do me the honour to quote this narrative."

All honor to Mr. Thackeray for daring to put forward such a truth. We consider that the insertion of this article in the world-wide *Cornhill Magazine*, is quite an era in the present campaign, and that although that portion of the press which has pledged itself too deeply against the possibility of these phenomena will be bound still to deny them, it will do so much more feebly than before, and endeavour to make a loophole for their escape from their present dilemma. There is probably no writer through the whole range of the press, whose name would carry more respect with it than that which belongs to the writer of this article, and it is, therefore, a heavy blow and sore discouragement to the deniers of the facts to find them asserted by one of the most respected and celebrated amongst themselves. There is one thing however, which is certain, and that is, that the public mind cannot fail to be deeply impressed with the truthful, calm statements of the writer; and it is to the public that we make our appeal, rather than to the narrower mind of their would-be leaders. If we take any trouble with the press, it is because such controversies awaken public interest, and keep alive the subject among a class whom we could not otherwise reach.

Register of Facts and Occurrences, relating to Literature, the Sciences, and the Arts.—No. 1, August. London: WELDON and Co.

OUR love of fair play, which we had fondly hoped that we possessed only in common with most Englishmen, has been often offended at the treatment which Spiritualism has received from the periodical press. The course usually pursued is either to

* *Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, p. 10.

ignore the whole matter as an awkward subject, or else, to rush at it in mad-bull fashion, with eyes obstinately closed to conviction, and an ignorant bellowing, which would be diverting did it not afford one more proof of the almost inconceivable influence which prejudice exercises even over those who aspire to guide the judgment of the less bookish public.

However, the tide appears to be turning, and those periodicals which exhibit a readier perception of truth than the contemporaries surely deserve honourable mention in the pages of this magazine. We, therefore, wish to call attention to the notice of Mr. R. D. Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of another World*, in the first number of this *Monthly Register*. The writer uses the following language:—

"Spiritualism is making converts on all sides every day. Without organization, without any visible advocacy, except that of a single magazine, in whose quiet pages the principal news respecting the movement is registered, it creeps silently from house to house. * * * * * All marvel, many believe: pious and thoughtful men ask what is the meaning of all this? What does it point to?—but there is no response. Upon this point, at all events, the oracle is dumb. The only thing about which we can be certain, is that a great revelation is going on amongst us. Opinions, which we ourselves, and our fathers before us, believed to be as firmly fixed as the everlasting hills, are being tunnelled, sapped, and blasted."

The article referred to, concludes thus:—

"What we call life is only a small fraction of human existence; yet it is sufficient in its duration, and sufficiently favourable in its conditions, to enable us sometimes to predicate our future destiny. There are high moments of inspiration common to all good men, when earthliness and selfishness are spell-bound to the divine gift that is within us, and when the soul, sybil-like, may be questioned of the future,—for the divine rage is then upon her, and her foreboding instincts are the earnest of what is to be. In these holy raptures, the presentiment is of a better world, but of a *world* still,—a world, which is the abode of human spirits: a world in which there is work to do, a race to run, a goal to reach; a world in which we shall find, transplanted from earth to a more genial land, energy, courage, perseverance, high resolves, benevolent actions, hope to encourage, mercy to plead, and love,—the earth-clog that dimmed her purity shaken off,—still selecting her chosen ones, but to be separate from them no more. It is to make these convictions certain,—to bring home, as it were, the senses and consciousness of men the facts that life is eternal, and that the grave is but the matrix of immortality,—that houses are permitted to be haunted, and that spirits are allowed to walk the earth, or to be called up from the vasty deep to move tables, ring bells, play upon musical instruments, or in any other way make known the fact of their continued existence. Such, at least, are the conclusions of Mr. Robert Dale Owen."

When we find such observations as the above in the first number of a new periodical, we cannot but augur favourably of the courageous and truthful temper with which its conductors seem prepared to carry it on. And as a fresh aspirant for public favour can scarcely be expected to commence by affronting the public taste, we gather further that the world is beginning to take some interest in the phenomena connected with the greatest and most marvellous fact of this most marvellous age.

There are many well written articles of sterling interest in the *Register*, and taking into consideration both quantity and quality, it is a wonder of cheapness.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

Sir,—Dr. Ashburner, Dr. Goodeve, of Bristol, Mr. Newton, Dr. Blank, Messrs. Waterhouse, Norton, Hurrey, self, and son, had a sitting with J. R. M. Squire (junior editor of the *Banner of Light*, a weekly newspaper published in America, and having a circulation of 30,000 copies), at the residence of Mr. Waterhouse, in Russell Square, London, at eight o'clock, p.m., on Friday, the 16th July, 1860. Shortly after sitting down at a large dining-room table (about 12 feet long), we heard clicks or tapplings on different parts of the table: they were not loud, but distinct; something like the sounds produced by the telegraphic clock when in action.

The table twice moved from its position a little. Mr. Squire then placed a pencil on a sheet of paper we had marked; and then as he held it in his hand under the table, I heard a movement underneath; and then it seemed as if the pencil and paper were forcibly taken away, and dropped to the floor. On picking the paper up we found some letters scrawled on it, which, on looking through the paper on the blank side, we found read "God bless you all." Dr. Blank felt the pulse of Mr. Squire while this was going on, and the rate was 138 beats per minute; his ordinary pulse is 60-65.

We then went to a large room: there was in it an uncurtained French bedstead, which Mr. S— removed a little from the wall, and placed nine chairs in a row, against one side of the room, opposite the foot of the bed. There was a very heavy oval-shaped table in the room, which we turned over and examined to see that there was no machinery connected with it. This table was placed by Mr. S— at such a distance from the bed as to allow a chair for him to sit upon, between him and the bed; he then placed another chair by the same side of the bed, and requested me to sit on it; he then sat on the chair before the table, rested one hand on it, and requested that his legs be tied to the chair, which was done with two handkerchiefs by one of the company; he then stretched out his disengaged right hand towards me, and I held it firmly till the close of the incident I am about to relate. The nine gentlemen present then sat on the chairs in a row, holding each other's hands; so that no movement by any one of them could be made without detection; the jet of gas at the side of the room was then put out by our host, and in about half a minute I felt something like a rapid current of air pass me. Mr. Squire said "It is gone." The gas was then lighted, and the table was found top downwards, lying on the bed clothes at the back of Mr. Squire; it having passed over his head. The company then loosed bands, came up, saw my hands still holding the right hand of Mr. S—, and his legs still tied to the chair. This movement of the table was repeated, two others of the company holding the hand of Mr. Squire. He then asked for a pocket-handkerchief to tie his wrists. I took mine, tied one end tightly round one wrist, and the other end round the other wrist, leaving the free use of the hands for stretching about six inches. He then desired a gentleman, who had evidently been puzzled with what he had seen, to come and stand with him at one end of the table, and place his hand firmly on one of his, on the top of the table: so that it was impossible for him, so tied and bound, in any way to lift the table. We all, except the two so standing, retired again to our row of chairs, held each other's hands, and the outermost one with his left hand put out the gas. In about half a minute, a violent blow from the leg of the table struck the floor;

and shortly after, Mr. Squire asked us to light the gas. When this was done a funny spectacle met our eyes; the table top was resting on the heads of the gentlemen who had been left standing; the legs of the table being towards the ceiling, and the gentlemen's hands still pressing against the top of the table. I let down the table, which, from its weight, I found to be no easy task. A gentleman who had placed his hand on the table, stated that he had pressed his whole weight on the table to prevent its rising; and *that* it was what caused the legs to come down with so much violence before the resistance was overcome. Of those present, only our host, Dr. Ashburner, Dr. Blount, and myself were at all accustomed to these phenomena; and Dr. Blount till a few weeks ago, opposed by voice and pen all belief in the subject. Now he frankly acknowledges its truth; but is sorely puzzled with—"What is the use of it?" A question to which we have no doubt he will in time find a satisfactory answer, as numbers have done who have passed through that state of mind in which he at present is. The others were the personal unbelievers; friends that Dr. Ashburner and I had brought to the sitting, in the hope of something being done, which by its physical character would uproot their theories of cerebral hallucination and mind acting on itself; and so producing fantasies.

The weak point in the portion of the manifestations which took place in the dark is, that they throw a shade of doubt on the minds of those who were present. Mr. Squire states that the spirits say they cannot produce the powerful manifestations through him in the light; he supposes because he is not so powerful a medium as some are. To his personal friends, and their friends he cheerfully, now and then, sits for their pleasure and profit.

I have read this account to Dr. Ashburner, and he thinks that the above plainly show: *First*, unseen intelligence; *Secondly*, the benevolence of the intelligence—for the table must have been raised at least four feet off the ground to pass over the head of Mr. Squire without hurting him; *Thirdly*, great power in conjunction with intelligence, in overcoming Mr. Newton's resistance—raising the table off the floor, and gently resting it on the heads of those who were standing. The height the table was lifted must have been at least six feet.*

I am, &c.,

Peckham, 10th July, 1860.

JOHN JONES

GHOSTS IN COSTUME.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

DEAR SIR,—I am sure that you are not afraid or unwilling to look at a difficulty fairly in the face, and therefore I hope that you will kindly permit me to lay before you a perplexing problem suggested by some of the well-attested "ghost stories" of Mr. Dale Owen and others. If you can propose any plausible theory as a solution of the said problem, you will confer a great favour on myself, and I doubt not, on multitudes beside.

I find no difficulty in believing in the appearance of departed spirits on this earth to the eyes of mortals. Such an event is credible either on the supposition of some internal power of vision appertaining to those in the flesh being opened to see the apparition, or else by supposing the departed spirit to be invested with some subtle material substance capable of reflection on the retina. Moreover, we have no right to cavil at the particular vesture of the spiritual appearance, if foreign to our experience. This may be the "white clothing" of the New Testament angel, or the various fantastic garments said to have been assumed by visitants from the unseen world in more modern times. Unless we accept as authoritative the assertions of Swedenborg, we know nothing whatever of the laws

* We have received a letter from Dr. Ashburner which confirms the foregoing account by Mr. Jones. Dr. A. enclosed a description of the table, by Mr. Burton, the maker of it, furnished to him on application by the owner. In this description the weight of the table is given as *seventy-two pounds*.—EDITOR.

relating to the dress of spirits. But we do know something of the make and material of the clothes in common use amongst us. We are perfectly certain that they are neither impalpable nor evanescent; and if spirits, from force of habit or anxiety to preserve their identity, don again their cast-off clothing, the unsophisticated mind may well be scandalized. Can you, sir, for instance, suggest any intelligible explanation of the appearance of an old gentleman of the last century (verified by Mr. Owen), in the "costume of the period." This is only one case out of a hundred presenting the like difficulty.

Great pains have been taken to show the probability that men possess spiritual bodies that can become visible. To render such narratives as that above referred to comfortably credible, it appears to us that we stand in need of a theory that shall prove the possibility of hats and great coats having also their spiritual representatives.

I beg to remain, yours very truly,

S. E. B.

[We have no space at present to enter into the discussion of the interesting question raised by our correspondent, but we will "take a note of it" with a view to respond at an early opportunity. Or, perhaps, some of our intelligent correspondents will favour us with their views upon this subject.—EDITOR.]

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

American Warehouse, London, 164, Strand,

August 3rd, 1860.

SIR—I will now proceed to relate, what was to me at the time it occurred, a very wonderful manifestation of "something." After the experience adduced in my letter to you last month, my faith in infidelity, as it is called, was very much shaken, and I determined to test the alleged facts of Spiritualism to the uttermost, and not to give in to them without the strictest scrutiny. I *only* wanted to know the truth, and if spirits could, and did communicate with mortals, I wanted to *know* it for myself. I, therefore, *determined* if it was possible to find out. I would leave no stone unturned to accomplish the desired end. With this determination uppermost in my mind, I concluded to travel to the South States (I was then living in Maine), and to use every caution in my power, to avoid being known in my travels. I left my home in Maine, telling my family I had some business which would occupy me some weeks, and as my business often took me from home for weeks at a time, nothing was thought of it. I proceeded direct from Boston to Philadelphia, not stopping in New York, for fear some one there would recognize me; and that, although, I might keep my *real business* secret, I fancied from what I had already witnessed, that by some incomprehensible mode of mind-reading, or in some other way, my business might become known, and thus defeat the very object of my enterprise. I took the precaution to leave all letters behind, that there might be no clue as to who I was, or where I came from. I also took a sea passage from New York to Philadelphia, instead of going by rail, for no other reason than that I thought I should be less liable to be recognized on board of a steamboat. With all these precautions, I arrived in Philadelphia for the first time in my life, and ordered the cabman to drive me to the "Franklin House," which I reached at 6.30, p.m. I wrote my name on the register of the hotel as "Charles Estell," instead of my real name. As you may not know, I will tell you, that when a traveller arrives at an hotel in our country, he is expected to sign his name in a book kept for the purpose. Directly after this, I took tea. I went up Chesnut Street (I have forgotten the number), where I had heard, before leaving at Boston, that a medium lived, who held public *séances*. On reaching the house, I was admitted into the room, where between 20 and 30 persons were seated round a large table; and while I was standing, looking for a place to sit (as I could see no unoccupied chair), the medium, who was an elderly lady, of some 60 or more years I should think, got up from the table. With her eyes closed, she came direct to me, and extending her hand, which I took in mine, she said to me "David, why didst thou sign thy name as Charles?" This was more than I bargained for, and I dare say the blood rushing to my face, portrayed something to my disadvantage, for I

could see after the above declaration, that all eyes were turned on me, and fancied that I was looked upon as a runaway from justice, or a pickpocket, highway robber. You cannot fully sympathise with my feelings at that moment unless you can fancy yourself in the same fix among total strangers. For several minutes, as it seemed to me, my tongue stubbornly refused to move. At last, I stammered inarticulately a denial to what the lady had said, upon which, she said to me, "*David*, was not thy own name as easy to write *Charles Estell*, which name thou hast but a few moments since written in the register of the Franklin House, *as thy own*." She then added "explain to the company thy motive for doing this, and do not doubt again that thy *grandmother* is ever with thee."* I *did* then explain to the company, after a fashion, my reasons; and after the explanation, the company were satisfied, and I took my place with them at the table, and got communications, which were entirely satisfactory to me. This occurred some six months after I had first interested myself in the phenomena, and after I had found I was myself to some extent, a medium; and from that time to *this very day* I have been getting beautiful evidences of the interest which our friends, on the other side the veil, take in our welfare. This world now, with all its ups and downs, seems to me a paradise, and the only regret I have, is the ignorance of the many of my brethren that Heaven is really so near to them; and that their blindness prevents them from being recipients of its influences.

Yours truly,

D. C. DINSMORE.

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—I agree with your correspondents in thinking that in publishing evidence respecting spiritual phenomena, it is desirable not to write anonymously, unless an individual is compelled to do so, for particular reasons, as in the case of Dr. Blank.

Acting upon this sentiment, I beg to forward to you the following epitome of what occurred during a *séance* recently with Mr. Mansfield, the well-known American writing medium, whom I saw in the city of Baltimore, where he was sojourning last winter. Mr. M. has replied to several thousands of persons who have sent to him sealed letters addressed to various deceased relatives and friends, and the satisfaction which, by virtue of his spiritual gift, he has given to numerous querents, has been frequently mentioned by the persons who have "experienced the same," in the *Banner of Light*.

I did not apply to Mr. M. by letter, but finding him in Baltimore, I called upon him. In that city he had been applied to by many people, secular and clerical, and he had made many converts. I will now proceed to inform you generally, of what occurred with respect to myself, during my visit to Mr. M.

There were on a table before him, various long slips of plain paper, and having received one of these, I was requested to think of some deceased person known by me when living, and to write in pencil these words from myself to that particular person, namely, "—, are you present?" Having done this and signed my name, at some distance from Mr. M., I was instructed to roll the top of the page up in at least half a dozen folds, and to touch the medium's finger, while he rubbed his fingers over the top of the paper so folded. This having been done, I observed that Mr. M.'s hand was violently moved as if he was affected by galvanic power, so much so that he could scarcely keep his right hand upon the paper, and forthwith he proceeded rapidly to write, filling

* My grandmother was a Quaker, or Friend, as they are sometimes called, and are still my own father and mother. You will see that in the first instance she only told the first part of the name I had substituted for my own; hence, I thought that she *might* have guessed that, and upon the idea of its possibility, I deemed that I had done so. But when she told me the whole name, as also the house where it was thus registered, it was then I felt that my character as to being reputable was anything but flattering.

several scrolls, and ending each finished communication with the christian and surname of the individual purporting to give the same. This was done in several instances, and the communication invariably contained some matter applicable to the respective positions of the querent and querited, when the latter was alive, especially so in one instance, where a statement was made which I myself only could understand, and which Mr. M. could not comprehend. Each communication was accurately addressed to myself by name, and in one instance, the relationship being wrongly stated, the mistake was corrected; but I afterwards ascertained that the mistake was originally mine, and that I was addressed as I had described myself. In one instance, there was some delay in obtaining the Christian name of the person applied to, but upon my requesting to have the names in full, they were correctly given. In this case, Mr. M. doubted at the commencement if he should be able to obtain any communication, and some time elapsed before it was made, perhaps five minutes. In two instances, the querited seemed to be acquainted in the spirit world, although unknown to one another in the flesh, and in one of these two cases, which I will describe as A and B, a curious reference was made in the second communication respecting the first one, A, viz.:—There had been a mistake in my initial name, which Mr. M. did not observe in his writing, but which I had remarked, without noticing it to him; but when the communication, B, was signed and finished as we thought, there came a postscript correcting the error in the statement, A. The querited signing the initials of the name. Mr. M. informed me he should visit England this year, and if he should, I would recommend those of your readers, who may feel interested in this subject, to test his marvellous power. The investigation is also worthy of research on the part of many of our philosophers and savans. Can any one of these learned gentlemen state satisfactorily in what manner Mr. Mansfield obtained these communications, except as a Spiritualist? I am, yours faithfully,

Full Mall, London,
16th August.

CHRISTOPHER COOKE.

DEPARTING OF SPIRITS.—Last Sunday forenoon the writer of this was in the Swedenborgian church, in this city, seated between a young lady and her father. The latter requested him to call the lady's attention to a spirit who was standing near the pulpit. She replied that she had seen the spirit when she entered the church, and saw him then in the place indicated by her father. At the close of the service the writer requested the father to describe the spirit, and subsequently repeated the request to the daughter. Without communicating with each other, or either hearing the description given by the other—for the daughter was walking in advance with her mother—their accounts nearly agreed, with this difference, that the daughter's description was more minute than that given by her father. The spirit appeared like a venerable man with a long white beard, and was robed in vestments of pure white. . . . The young lady also saw in the pulpit the spirit of the late Reverend Theodore Parker standing on the right side of the speaker; and he appeared to listen with earnest attention. It may be proper to state that the young lady who professes to have seen these spirits has had this seeing gift from childhood. For many years she supposed that every one saw spirits like herself; but when she discovered her mistake, she requested an explanation from her father, who informed her that he inherited the faculty from himself. Like his daughter, he had seen spirits all his life. Both are intelligent, quiet people, who would shrink from public notice, and who rarely speak of their spiritual gifts to any but their intimate friends. The young lady says that she passes nearly two-thirds of her time in the world of spirits, and that she can leave the body at pleasure. She stands, as were, upon the bridge that connects the natural world with the world of spirits. Her power of perceiving spirits is never obscured, nor is she at any time in a rapturous state; but at all times she sees the spirits of the departed mingling with the living, and influencing them for good or evil.—*Boston Traveller, July 3rd.*

SPIRIT-MANIFESTATIONS IN CLEVELAND, U.S.

THERE was a large promiscuous gathering at the Davenport Rooms last night to witness spirit-manifestations. As usual, Mr. Davenport invited the sceptics present to appoint a committee to see that the mediums were bound secure hand and foot to the benches inside their spirit-box.

The boys (mediums) took their seats, and the committee proceeded to tie their legs and their bodies to the benches, one on each end of the box, some ten feet apart.

When they came to secure their hands, one of the committee drew from his pocket a pair of patent iron handcuffs, which he procured from some policeman with which he proposed to *fix* the mediums and to end the humbug of their playing on fiddles, tambourines, and guitars with their hands tied. According to the plan, after tying their legs together, and their bodies fast down to the benches with ropes, they placed the hands of the mediums behind their backs and put the handcuffs upon them.

There was a grin of delight on the countenances of that unbelieving committee as they finished binding and handcuffing the boys and stepped from the spirit-box among the audience. The doors of the box were closed, and there was a moment of breathless stillness and anxiety to know the result. At first a single fiddle-string was snapped, which showed there was a hand about which could not be tied down or shackled. Then the instrument was picked up and turned with fingers and bow, and with apparently strong hands. A tune was then played in which the guitar, tambourine, drum, and bell, all joined, bringing down the house in applause for the spirits. A light was struck, the doors of the spirit-box opened, and there sat the boys bound and cuffed, precisely as the committee had left them.

Another test was then proposed, which was to hang the keys which unlocked the handcuffs, inside the box, out of the reach of the boys, and then to see if the spirits could unlock the cuffs, "unloose the bonds and let the captives free." It was done. In about three minutes the handcuffs were heard rattling in invisible hands, and suddenly they were both thrown out of an aperture near the top of the box, on to the floor, and the boys were free. After which, when a spirit-hand was made plainly visible to all in the room, by the light of a double tapered lamp held near it.—*Cleveland Plaindealer*, May 28th.

THE SLOWNESS OF BELIEF IN A SPIRITUAL WORLD.

THE astronomer with patient, searching gaze
Doth with his tube the depths of space explore ;
Shews Neptune's orb, or, 'neath the solar blaze,
Reveals a world by man unseen before.
Justly the world rewards his arduous toil,
And claims to share the glory of his fame ;
Beyond the boundaries of his native soil
From land to land the breezes bear his name.
But he who doth a Spirit-world reveal,
Not far in space, but near to every soul ;
Which naught but mists of sense and sin conceal,
(Would from men's sight those mists at length might roll !)
He is with incredulity received,
Or with a slow, reluctant faith believed.

Religious Magazine